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THE SOUDAN

THREE MONTHS

IN

THE SOUDAN

BY

ERNESTINE SARTORIUS

38215
a c

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1885

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THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE OUT.

My Step-daughter and myself start from England—Passengers on board—Algiers—Ritualistic and Low Church Controversy—Malta—Its Churches—Governor's Palace—Divers—News of Disaster—Port Said—News from my Husband—Taken off by the Gendarmes—Café Chantant—Post-boat in Canal—Ismailia—Anecdote of late Khedive's A.D.C.—Marks of British Occupation—Lines of Tel-el-Kebir—The Egyptians ploughing—Drawing Water—Zagazig—Its Manufactures and Station—First View of Cairo—Meet my Husband.

As the cholera epidemic had passed away in Egypt, and it was considered quite safe to return there, my step-daughter and myself took passages by the British India line of steamers, and on the 14th of November, 1883, started from the Royal Albert Docks, in the *Eldorado*. I must say, she was not a good specimen of the line, for she was very dirty, and the food was very badly cooked. The saloon tables were decorated with an attempt at finery, in the shape of artificial flowers of every description, and

these, though good of their kind, failed like all shams. The waiters were all natives of India, as is usual with lines plying to the East. Consequently, until they put on their own white native costume at Malta, they looked excessively dirty and miserable. It was a very fine day at starting, but as we approached the Isle of Wight it got so very foggy that the steamer nearly ran aground there. The sea was, however, comparatively calm, thus allowing the passengers to make each other's acquaintance from the beginning. Principal amongst them was Mr. Plimsoll, M.P., his daughter, and a friend, who were going to Calcutta; a Major and Mrs. Empson, and about twenty others, proceeding to other places in India. We caught it, though, on reaching the Bay of Biscay, for we came in for the roll left by a big Atlantic storm. This made every one disappear below; and, indeed, we were very uncomfortable until we got into the Mediterranean.

20*th*.—What a contrast it is to-day, to the cold, damp weather in England which we have only left six days ago! Here, in view of Algiers, with its Oriental buildings glowing in the rays of a Southern setting sun, the bright hues of the Mediterranean Sea, so completely in harmony with the gorgeous scene, making everything so bright, peaceful, and quiet, it seems hard to believe that little more than a hundred years ago this picturesque town was still the seat of a pirate horde. But here are four bells striking, and the dinner-bell going, so we must rouse ourselves from our reveries and return to everyday life.

On the 21st we passed the island of Panteliari, one of those volcanic productions of the Mediterranean, which even now are growing up, rising, and disappearing. The town on the island is made up of square, flat-roofed houses; they are invariably white-washed, and therefore give the appearance, in the distance, of a lot of tombstones, the vegetation being so scarce that it does not take way from this effect.

A very amusing story has just been told me, relating to the controversy between a swell and very advanced Ritualist, and a by no means clever, but very determined member of the Low Church. These two were sitting opposite to each other at dinner, when the Ritualist happened to observe that they always had matins in his church. The other immediately pricked up his ears at this, and taking it as a challenge, shouted, much to the amusement of the company, "Why, mats, only mats! We have in our church kamptulicon right up to the altar!"

We arrived at Malta at 5 a.m. the 23rd of November, and, passing the splendid lighthouse of St. Elmo on our right, and port Ricasoli on our left, anchored close to the Custom-house. The captain having told us the ship was to remain until the afternoon, everybody hurried off to the town. Our party landed at the steps and walked on to the square in front of the Government-house, to enjoy fresh bread and butter, and good coffee—a luxury we had so long been deprived of. After that we visited the Church of St. John, which, crowded as it is with remembrances of

the old Knights of Malta, in the shape of various relics of that time, and the chapels to the different nations situated on either side of the aisle, brings vividly back to one's mind the romantic history of their struggles with the infidels. Besides the above the most remarkable things are the following:—In the Portuguese chapel a group of statuary, representing Charity and Justice, by Mariano Gavano, a Maltese sculptor, who died in France. He has also another group behind the altar, supposed to be his masterpiece, and especially remarkable as being carved out of one block of marble. The subject is the Baptism of our Saviour by St. John. In the French chapel the sculptured figure on the tomb of the Comte de Beaujolais, brother of Louis Philippe, representing him as having fallen asleep on the camp ground, is very good. The artist was an Italian. In the Italian chapel was a very fine picture by Michael Angelo, representing St. Jerome studying a book. An extremely interesting portion of the church is the marble flooring, inscribed with the arms of the various knights of the order who are buried below. Every great family of Europe has its representatives, and it would be in the highest degree interesting to study their various histories. I fancy many a book more than vieing with even the best of Sir W. Scott's could be made out of the materials so gathered; but we have no time to examine them all, and so go on to the solid silver gates at the entrance to the Irish chapel, though, after all, these have very little effect, as the brown painting with which the silver was

coated in order to give them the effect of bronze, and thus to prevent the French soldiers looting them, still remains.

After leaving the Church of St. John, we went to the market, a very dirty and not at all interesting spot, with nothing much to be got there but Mandoline oranges, not yet ripe enough to be good eating. From the market we went to the Governor's palace, where there is a very fine ball and council-room. The walls of the latter were covered with tapestry eight hundred years old, representing the four quarters of the globe. We also saw, in the same room, several chairs, including the Grand Master's, all relics of the Knights of St. John. Passing on, we came to the armoury, filled with old armour that had belonged to the same knights. On the walls of this room, were the colours of the 63rd and another regiment, looking strangely out of place amongst all this armour, for somehow one expects old colours to be put away in some church, and not in a store like this. Inside the courtyard of the palace was a lovely garden, filled with large trees, and looking all the brighter for the want of anything of the kind in the rest of the town. There was a very large poinsettia in full blossom, also orange trees with plenty of oranges on them, and a lovely bougainvillea in full flower, climbing up the west wall. I saw also a blue ipomæa on the opposite side. Flowers in Malta are very cheap, and we were offered a large basket of roses and heliotrope for a shilling. I bought a large bunch for a penny, and they lasted

three days on board ship. Time passing, we had to put an end to our roamings and return to the ship, which sailed soon afterwards.

While waiting to start, we had an opportunity of seeing the wonderful diving powers of the Maltese, who, helped by the clearness and buoyancy of the water, rapidly pick up the shillings and sixpences that are thrown down, before these have sunk to any depth. They showed their real powers by diving under the ship from one side to the other without any apparent difficulty. It is evidently a regular trade, and the divers get very sharp about it, as they will not go down for anything but silver. They know the glint of the latter very well, and though a gentleman on board threw down a well-burnished farthing, no one would go after it, for all knew that none of the passengers would throw them gold. The clanging of the bells is another curious circumstance. The Maltese have a superstition that this ringing drives away the devil, so they go at it as fast as they can, without reference to time or tune. By-the-by, this is just the contrary to the Mussulman idea, who think that ringing brings the devil, and therefore have no bells in their mosques, but call to prayers by means of men shouting from the minarets. The Maltese themselves do not as a whole bear a very good character, though a great many work very hard indeed, and become respectable members of society; but there is no doubt the scum of the Mediterranean population is composed of Maltese, Southern Italians, and Greeks,

ON OUR CAMELS.

and it is notorious what a very bad scum this is. They are exceedingly superstitious and very vain. An amusing instance of the latter quality occurred on the occasion of a grand public dinner which was given here to the officers returning from the Crimea. One of the officers of the Malta Fencibles, rising, proposed the toast of "Malta and England," adding that as long as they were allied together, they could face the whole world.

Before leaving the island we heard the great and unfortunate news of the defeat of General Hicks's army in the Soudan, and the total massacre of his troops. This news much excited us, for we thought it might have some effect on my husband's future movements. From to-day, the 26th, we were enabled to sit on deck and enjoy the warmth. It really seemed to give one new life, and we enjoyed it all the more because, while basking in this lovely sunshine, one's thoughts recurred to the climate that we had just left. After leaving Malta we did not see land until we arrived at Port Said, on the 28th of November at 5 a.m., when we were awoke by the whistle of the boat making a great noise; so, despairing of getting any more sleep, especially as there were several other boats whistling at the same time, we got up, dressed, and went on deck, and amused ourselves by watching the busy life around us.

I was expecting news of my husband, and, none coming, got impatient and sent him a telegram saying I had arrived. At about 12 o'clock, the Comte de Montjoie, who was commanding the police

at Port Said, came on board, introduced himself, and gave me a letter from my husband, who wrote that on account of the preparations for the war he could not meet me, and that the Comte de Montjoie would do all that was necessary. Accordingly the latter returned to the shore to send off boats with two or three of his men and his brigadier, who took entire charge of the boxes and ourselves too. We were very much chaffed by the passengers, who said we were being taken off by gendarmes, but it was a great comfort, and very pleasant having everything done for us. When we arrived at the hotel, our room and luncheon had been ordered at the only good hotel there, the "Pays Bas."

In the evening Mr. Burrel, the English Vice-Consul, took us to the great Café Chantant, a place kept up most respectably, though greatly on the proceeds of a *rouge-et-noire* table belonging to the house. Major Shakespeare, of General Wood's army, Mr. Baker, Consul for Khartoum, and the Comte de Montjoie also came with us. All the principal people have their regular seats; in fact, it is almost a theatre. A rather good actress was there that night, and she raised a *furore* by singing the "Marseillaise" with great *entrain*, the greater part of the audience being French troops on their way to Tonquin, who had just come in by a French troop-ship. What delighted these soldiers most was the compliment she paid to their country by coming on to the scene, wearing three ribbons across her dress, arranged according to the French colours.

The applause was deafening even at the very first, and when she finished her song, it was repeated over and over again. One reason for staying so late was the inconvenient hour the postal launch starts down the Canal, viz. midnight, and it was only after a good deal of trouble that, getting the baggage to the wharf, we started with several other passengers, all crowded up in a small saloon. We might have stayed till next day, but were in a hurry to see my husband, for we were much startled by hearing he would have to go to the Soudan almost immediately.

What a night we had of it! The seats were narrow; the people were many of them foreigners, who would try and shut out all ventilation; the sides of the cabin were straight up, and so gave no rest to one's back; and we had to go on all night, not arriving at Ismailia till nearly 7 a.m. At that place there is a rather nice little hotel close to the water, but by mistake we passed it, and went on to a small French one, where luckily they gave us a decent breakfast, and at 11 a.m. got into the train for our final day's travel.

Before quite leaving off all notice of the great salt-water Canal, I could not help thinking what a splendid instance this was of the late Khedive's power of will, and how lucky it was for the world he had this will, for without him the Canal could not have been made. It is as well not to look too closely at the history of its construction, nor the lives lost over it, amounting to hundreds of thou-

sands. The Bulgarian atrocities did not cause more misery. The poor wretched gangs of fellahs starved and driven by the Koorbash to work to their last gasp, present an awful picture of misery that is almost too painful to think about in spite of the great results obtained. His magnificent extravagance is well exemplified in the small palace he built for the Empress Eugénie, and which has never been occupied since. Here, too, an instance of thorough Oriental arbitrariness occurred. The Empress, while thanking the Khedive for the magnificent reception he had given her, happened to say that the only thing she had not seen was an Arab marriage. "Indeed," said the Khedive, "this shall soon be remedied." So he sent for his A.D.C., gave him one of his Circassian slaves from the harem, presented him with a large dowry, and told the astonished official that everything was to be ready in two days. Accordingly, on the second day there was a grand marriage *à l'Arabi*. The Empress was greatly pleased, and the A.D.C., a man far more European than Egyptian, and who spoke several European languages, splendidly found himself indissolubly attached to a Mahomedan wife, while all along it had been the dream of his life to marry a European lady, one educated like himself, and with whom he could associate. But he knew he dared not refuse, and so an accident settled his whole future life.

While going out of the Ismailia station our attention was attracted to the marks of the late

English occupation, in the shape of notices written on the walls of various buildings, to the effect of this being the bakery, that the artillery store, another the commissariat, etc. From what we saw of the place, one cannot but come to the conclusion that the French manage to make up a much neater town than we do. The roads are all at right angles to each other, very well kept, and there are small and pretty public gardens in the centre; not only that, but the native town, equally straightly laid out, was kept, with all its stinks, well away from the European quarter. To get to Nefish one has to cross a large fresh-water canal, and on it we saw our first diabeah. I was rather interested in this, as we were to have lived in one at Cairo. From this station the rail runs through the desert, nothing but sand the whole way until just before we got to Tel-el-Kebir, where cultivated ground steadily begins to dominate. Coming up to this latter place, there were all along the route unmistakable signs of the passage of English troops, in the shape of empty meat-tins of every kind, bits of telegraph wires strewed about, the little well-known fireplaces of the Indian troops, broken crockery, and even bits of paper blowing about. From the train a very good sight is obtained of the lines of Tel-el-Kebir. They stretch right and left on either side of the railway, and do not seem to be very formidable, owing to the want of what military men call flank defence. The cemetery, where are buried those of our troops who fell there, is close to

the station, and though the trees and flowers have only been planted a very short time, yet their extraordinary growth proves how fertile the so-called desert is when it is watered even a little.

It is curious to observe how defined the line is between the rich green cultivation and the barren yellow desert. The only kind of trees of any size are the graceful date palms, which have no foliage to hide this boundary. Signs of the rise of the Nile strike one everywhere; the canals are all full, and the water is being let into the fields in that careful and methodical manner for which the Egyptian fellah has always been famed. He works with the same instrument as his forefathers, the same old wheel at the well turned by the patient buffalo; he has the same way of raising water by lever and weight, or else by men standing on either side of a small water-hole, lifting up the water with a wretched old palm-leaf basket. Nothing seems changed from what one remembers to have seen drawn in the sketches of their oldest monuments. There is, however, a very great want of cattle, owing to the disease and the exigencies of the late war. Camels and donkeys or camels and buffaloes are constantly seen harnessed together, the wretched camel looking intensely miserable, and as if he would like much to make them understand that his business was to carry, and not to draw. We soon had to give up observing the country, and shut up the windows tight, as the dust got so troublesome; and we amused ourselves in the best way we could until we got to Zagazig, where

we had lunch—a meal for which we paid greatly and got very little. Zagazig is the most important junction in Egypt. It is at this place that all the principal railways of the country meet. The town itself is inhabited by a considerable number of Europeans, and there are several manufactories. Others were in the process of construction; but the late war stopped them all, and the English occupation, instead of increasing business, seems to diminish it still more—at least, so the inhabitants declare.

Near here there is a very ancient city, the traces of whose existence are lost in the dim mists of past ages, but it is so ruined, and tradition is so still about it, that only the most learned antiquaries find interest in it. The station was crowded with all sorts of people—Jews, Greeks, English, French, Italians; Mussulmans of all kinds, Turks, Egyptians, and Arabs, the two latter distinguished by their dirty appearance; women with their faces covered up; children howling, their eyes filled with flies;—indeed, specimens of all tribes and races, clean and unclean, which it would take me longer than the time the train stops at the station to notice specially. The constant passing of passengers and tourists makes the boys and hangers-on at this station a set of most impudent beggars; they are always on the look-out for backshish, and keep putting their heads in at the carriage window, shouting for something.

After leaving Zagazig and approaching Galloub, the first sight of the citadel of Cairo is got, and soon after the Pyramids come into view; trees also get

larger and more numerous—indeed, so much so that people say that the climate is in consequence beginning to change and become more damp. If such is the case, good-bye to many of the monuments of old, such as mummies, etc., which have only been preserved through all these long ages owing to the intense dryness of the desert air. What a pity that would be! But there was no time then to think of these things, as we were fast approaching Cairo, and we could already see the railway buildings that had been blown up during the time of the British occupation, owing to a train-load of shells and ammunition taking fire. At the station itself we were met by my husband, who, by way of greeting, informed us that he was off to the Soudan the next day, and that if we wanted to see anything of him we must go with him to Suakim. This was, indeed, anything but pleasant news, though of course we made up our minds at once to go with him; fortunately, we had no time to think, but had to hurry off to our house in the Shoobra Road.

CHAPTER II.

CAIRO.

EGYPTIAN WATCHMEN—OUR HOUSE—SHOOBRA ROAD—CATHOLIC CONVENT—CELEBRATED GARDENS OF CICOLANI—FASHIONABLE DRIVE—THE KHEDIVE—SIR EVELYN BARING—A VISIT TO GENERAL BAKER—SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL—GENERAL BAKER'S DIABEAH—PARTY TO THE PYRAMIDS—THE HOWLING DERVISHES—SUPERSTITIONS OF THE EGYPTIANS—COPTIC CHURCH—EGYPTIAN FLIES—CITADEL—DONKEY-BOYS—VIEW OF CAIRO AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY FROM THE CITADEL—HOUSES OF EGYPTIAN FELLAHS—BOULAK MUSEUM—DISCOVERY OF PHARAOH OF THE BIBLE—CAIRO DOGS—TURKISH GENDARMERIE REFUSE TO GO TO THE SOUDAN—PARADE BEFORE THE KHEDIVE—EXTRAORDINARY SCENES AT THE STATION ON DEPARTURE OF TROOPS—OUR SERVANTS—MY HUSBAND HAS AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KHEDIVE—VISIT TO THE VICE-QUEEN—THE ESBEKIAH RESTAURANT—TRAIN GOES OFF WITHOUT US—THE WOODEN ARMY—MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD'S IDEA OF THE HOPELESSNESS OF ANYBODY COMING BACK SAFE—OUR DEPARTURE—THE BITTER LAKES—THE EGYPTIAN POSTAL STEAMER *ZAGAZIG*.

WE had intended to sleep late, as we were tired, but, although the shouting of the Gaffirs, or watchmen, and the occasional howl of one of the many dogs about, prevented us from having an altogether undisturbed night, we were thoroughly awoke in the early morning by men driving camels and donkeys,

coming in laden with grass and vegetables, and who made so much noise that we were obliged to get up, in spite of still feeling the fatigue of the previous day; but when once out of bed, the delightful clear atmosphere, the fragrance of the flowers, and the newness of the place made one forget the troubles of the night.

The first thing we did was to look over our house. It is a very large, square-built one, with a splendid big marble hall on the ground-floor, and an equally fine granite staircase communicating with the upper floor. A fine date-palm tree looks in at the big window half-way up the staircase. Upstairs there are six large rooms, besides smaller ones, all eighteen feet high, and therefore thoroughly suited for the summer heat. The drawing-room is furnished with Indian furniture, while my boudoir was arranged to suit the very pretty Zanzibar grass-cloth curtains my husband had brought from Aden. One special piece in this room that was always admired was my writing-table, made of teakwood in the old Saxon style, by Wimbridge of Bombay. There is a large balcony in the front of the house, looking on to the Shoobra Road. It is along this latter that the Khedive drives twice a week, and in consequence every one else does the same thing! On account of the water of the Nile having permeated everywhere, our garden was not yet in a state to walk in; but it will look lovely later on, for it is full of poinsettias, honeysuckle, oleanders, orange trees, etc. I must not forget the date trees, and also the luxuriant vine,

which covered the picturesque well in the centre of the garden. Close to us is the Catholic convent, where an excellent education is given at a very cheap rate; a little beyond is the celebrated garden of Cicolani, a rich draper of Cairo. He made up this garden, and built a splendid house in the midst of it, in hopes that Ismail Pasha, late Khedive, would buy it; but he rather over-shot his mark, by putting such a price on it that even Ismail Pasha, much as he liked new buildings, drew off.

The drive into the garden is along an avenue branching off from the Shoobra Road. For this bit of ground, about 300 yards, Cicolani, they say, had to pay £10,000, for it appears that when he originally bought the property there was no road leading up to it from any regular thoroughfare, and Cicolani was too much employed building his palace and making up his garden, to think about that. The consequence was, that when he came to bargain with the owner of the land along which the avenue now runs, the aforesaid owner had already seen how impossible it was for Cicolani to do without it. Poor Cicolani had, therefore, to pay this exorbitant price. But whatever the question of money was, the gardens are nevertheless beautifully laid out. The avenue of oleanders during the month of May is a sight not to be seen anywhere else, for they are one mass of double flowers that quite cover up the parent tree. Then, the peculiar climate of Egypt enables many of the northern trees and plants to grow luxuriantly side by side with those of tropical climes, and thus

allow of the full charm of variety. Nothing can be more beautiful than the wonderful clusters of purple bougainvillea growing all over a kind of grotto made up of petrified wood, from the celebrated forests of the same. In a little water in front of the grotto is the lotus-flower, a regular Indian plant; while in the shade of some of the petrified wood are several beautiful English ferns. Overshadowing the water bends a graceful clump of bamboos, hardly hiding a group of ash trees which spring straight up behind it. Mixed with all these are beautiful clusters of roses, enormous tropical aloes, palm trees of every kind; while darting through them here and there, and adding life to the scene, are small birds of various colours, pursuing the bright dragon-flies that flit about the water. While, to complete all, the bright, soft radiance of a Southern winter sun diffuses its cheerful influence all round, making one think that here at least perfect peace and happiness is possible. A little past the grotto is another small piece of water, springing from the centre of which is a rockery tastefully covered with ferns, and forming the pedestal to two statues of children, a boy and girl, the boy holding an umbrella over the girl's head; the trees around cover them with a deep shadow, and the *tout ensemble* is very pretty and shows great taste. We did not go into the house, as it requires special permission from the owner; and, after all, it is only furnished in the gaudy Parisian style. Cicolani himself comes here from his shop, for an hour or so, morning and evening, and when he does sleep here

always occupies two small scantily furnished rooms over the stables.

The day after we arrived at Cairo was one of the Shubra gala-days, and everybody drove or rode along it. Let us suppose ourselves on the balcony watching them. To begin with, here are the mounted gendarmes coming to station themselves along the road. They are dressed in blue uniform with yellow facings, long boots, tarbooshes, and mounted on grey horses. Their arms are swords and a sort of long-barrelled pistol in their hands, to which a kind of steel triangle is attached, so as to enable them, in case of necessity, to use the triangle as a butt and fire from the shoulder. These gendarmes appear about 3 p.m. Soon after, a few carriages begin to drive up, containing generally strangers or others who do not quite know the customs of the place. About 4 p.m. the real business begins. Here come, for instance, half a dozen carriages driving wildly up, two of them containing ladies of some harem, the transparency of whose veils invariably is in proportion to the beauty or otherwise of the face underneath. The veil (yashmak) is so thin with some of them that it really does not hide the face at all, but merely slurs over any little defect in the complexion; and undoubtedly adds very much to the piquancy of the eyes, for which these Circassians are so much famed. The yashmak is a sort of double veil. The first brought round the forehead and gathered neatly up behind and on the head; the second,

pinned on behind to the first, falls sufficiently in front to uncover the eyes. The common people wear a hideous black thing, hung on to the sort of black silk, or other kind of thick stuff cloth that covers their head, by a kind of nose-guard. Another amongst these carriages belongs to one of the consuls, as we know by the gorgeously dressed dragoman who is seated on the box; the next is loaded with young France out for a holiday, and therefore smoking, shouting, and singing to show how completely they are at their ease. Mixed with these carriages are black eunuchs, riding on splendid horses, dressed up in the latest European fashion, and looking far more important than their masters, who have probably just gone quietly by. The snob of this place is also well represented in the shape of a dozen or so European and native riders, who go rushing frantically about, hoping to show off their horsemanship, while in reality they only scatter mud about the place, stampede the horses, and bring general execration on their heads from the passers-by. Equally a nuisance are the native cartmen, with their long low carts drawn by mules or donkeys, and which they drive in the most reckless manner, as hard as these poor wretched animals can go, for they know that their carts cannot suffer damage, and that therefore every one must get out of the way.

Now it is about five o'clock, and accordingly here comes the Khedive, bowing, right and left, to all those he meets. In olden times the natives,

at least, had all to stop their carriages, get out, and stand by them, making the usual salaam till he had passed. Now all this is over; people of course salute, but in a very different manner, and it is evident the power of the Khedive is not much thought of. His escort consists only of a dozen or so of his body-guard, and with him in his carriage is one of his principal aide-de-camps; while behind, in a couple of others, are a few more of his suite. His horses are fine English ones; the carriage is a simple victoria; everything is in the most simple style.

Soon after the Khedive, the English minister, Sir E. Baring, passed, and the drive is at its fullest. It is a curious thing, with reference to this promenade, that people make it a duty to come here on these two special days, when they would find it so much less dusty and crowded on any other. If, as in India, there was some place at the end of the drive where a band played, and people could meet together and have a chat, there would be some sense in it; but, as it is, nothing but the usual obedience to the laws of fashion can account for it. The road itself is very bad, and threatens the strongest carriage-springs; the repair being done with the soft stone quarried from the Mokattem heights, and therefore, within a month of its being laid down, the holes and hollows are as bad as ever. The only pretty part of it are the large trees which line its whole length, and which are being rapidly cut down, and the view

being at the end close to the old palace of Shoobra, where a very fine sight of the Nile and the Pyramids in the distance is obtained. Half an hour after sunset the last of the carriages has passed on its way home, and, as we had taken the precaution to give notice to the head of the Gaffirs that we would not allow their shouts close to our house, the whole place is quiet.

In the morning my husband went back to his office, as there was a great deal to do with reference to sending off the troops to Suakim. I will not now anticipate the next chapter, which gives the detail of the forces, but will go on to the incidents of the day. We went to see my husband at the office at 10 a.m. It is in the Ismailia quarter, close to the large buildings which contain the War Office, Public Works and Sanitary Department. Everything was in the greatest bustle, it being extremely important that the troops should go at once. We here saw, for the first time, poor Colonel Abdul Russak, who was afterwards killed at Teb. We then went off and called on General Baker Pasha at Shepheard's Hotel. His daughter, Miss Baker, being very ill, our visit was naturally a short one, but we took away with us the impression of a very kind, quiet-mannered gentleman. Shepheard's Hotel is a regular meeting-place for everybody, and is as much renowned now as it was in the olden time, when there was no railway, and travellers used to be jogged about in those awful vans across the desert. It is on the piazza in front that

everybody who wishes to gather news meets of an evening; it is also a most convenient place to watch the passers-by, the road in front being one of the principal thoroughfares in Cairo. At the end of the garden is Cook's tourists' office; a little further on, Seebah, an excellent photographist. In front, under the arcades, are a column of fine shops, containing all that is necessary for travelling. The Esbekiah gardens are also close by. These were got up by Ismail Pasha, who, as usual, did the thing well. A band plays there every day; in hot weather there is an open-air theatre, with an excellent Italian company. The walks are very nicely laid out, and, as a small charge is made for entering, the absolute riffraff is kept out, thus making it a most pleasant lounge. There is also a very good restaurant here, where breakfast, tiffin, and dinner can be had at very good and cheap rates.

In the afternoon we went off to see General Baker's diabeah, which was moored to the banks of the Nile at Gazeerah. The *Hermione*, as it is named, is a large, long, flat-bottomed boat, the after part of which is entirely devoted to cabins. There were six sleeping-cabins, with accommodation for ten people, a saloon about twelve feet by twelve, and another about twelve feet by eight, a pantry, and servants' cabin. The deck above was covered over with matting, lined inside with chintz, thus making one fine big room. Needless to say, it was beautifully furnished, with carpets brought by the General from all parts of the world, and several pieces of moresque

furniture from that famous man Parvis. This latter is a great man in Cairo. His moresque furniture stands quite unrivalled, and it is a real treat to go to his shop. I was disappointed at the view from the boat. Cairo has not the number of minarets and mosques that make Oriental cities look so pretty. We saw nothing but square-built, dirty houses, lending anything but enchantment to the view. Near here is the palace of Prince Hassan, the Khedive's brother, who has only lately been permitted to return to Egypt. His children were driving along the road as we came on shore; they are very pretty and lady-like, and are being educated by English governesses.

Of course, following out the regular routine, we had to visit the Pyramids, and so made up a party to go there, consisting of Colonel Harington, Mrs. Greville Davis, ourselves, and one or two others. We went in two carriages, and on our way passed through the Khedive's grounds at Gazeerah. He has here two large palaces and a very great extent of land surrounded by a big wall. This land the late Khedive caused to be raised to a height of six feet over the usual level, partly to please himself by having dry ground during the rise of the Nile, but principally in order to give work to crowds of his poor subjects who were suffering from the effects of a bad Nile. Immediately outside the gates, towards the Pyramids, is the town of Gazeerah, a most dirty, overcrowded place, which therefore, of course, suffered most severely during the late epidemic of cholera. The road from here runs almost straight

to the Pyramids. Nothing worth noticing occurs the whole way along, especially as one's attention is really fixed to lessening as much as possible the effects of the jolting one is constantly suffering from when going along it. The moment you arrive you are surrounded by a crowd of yelling Arabs, who as a rule take regular possession of any sightseers that may happen to come. We fortunately had Colonel Harington with us, who knew the whole place well, and therefore very soon got rid of all these natives but the necessary one or two. The Pyramids and the Sphinx have been so often described that I will not attempt it again here. All that I can say is, that the general impression is one of vastness, unchangeableness, and repose. ~~Bret Harte~~, in his "Innocents Abroad," gives as good an idea as any I have ever seen described.

On Friday is the day to see the howling dervishes. These wretched fanatics assemble in a mosque close to the old town. They have a leader, who, standing in the middle of a semicircle formed in front of him, repeats one of the ninety-nine names of Allah (God); the others catch it up, go on repeating it, throwing themselves backwards and forwards quicker and quicker till they get perfectly exhausted. Many of those in the circle are very holy dervishes, and therefore have very long hair, and are exceedingly dirty. At each change in the name they get more and more excited, and throw off their superfluous clothing to give themselves increased freedom in their movements. One of them, after a time,

advances towards the centre, and, keeping one foot on the ground as a fulcrum, shoves himself round and round with the other. A tom-tom is further used as the excitement flags; but at last physical force can do no more, and they are obliged to stop, and then comes the demand for backshish. The origin of this curious custom is probably the superstition that to every one of the ninety-nine names of Allah a powerful angel is attached; so when a devotee has lived a life pleasing to God, and has repeated one of these names often enough, God orders the angel belonging to that name to become the faithful slave of the above devotee, and thereby enables the latter to be all-powerful in this world. Such is, indeed, the means by which the Mahdi gained his power over the ignorant Soudanese, for he separated himself for eight hours a day for several years, lived in a cave, incessantly shouting only the name of one of those attributes, until at last he obtained the desired power —so, at least, the Soudanese and Arabs believe. Another reason, too, is that each believer is supposed to possess a certain portion of ground in Paradise. Every time this believer repeats certain prayers and goes through the names of Allah, so many trees plant themselves in his possessions there. Should he, therefore, have said his prayers properly, it lies in his power to have a far more magnificent property in Paradise than any of those rich men here below, who have no time or will to pay attention to these duties.

From the mosque of the howlers a short distance

takes us to another, where there is a well, which, the Egyptians are firmly convinced, communicates direct with Mecca. It is affirmed, in proof thereof, that a lady once dropped a water-jar into this well, and shortly afterwards going to Mecca, found it there. Turning to Christian traditions, there is the Coptic church, built over the place where the Virgin Mary rested herself on her flight from Jerusalem. There were three small niches in the sides of the cave, which the holy family were supposed to have occupied. There was nothing else interesting in the church, though outside, the small narrow, crooked streets, the high houses, the dirty inhabitants, the donkeys and small shops made each nook and corner look extremely picturesque, while at the same time the smells emanating from these same corners rapidly sent us off to more open parts of the city.

As in old days, the flies are the great plague. Nothing strikes strangers so much as the extraordinary manner in which natives, old and young, allow these flies to crawl about their eyes, nose, and mouth, without attempting to brush them off, or even seeming to feel them. We have often seen men lying down asleep in the middle of the day, with their nostrils and mouth quite covered with flies, and yet their sleep was as peaceful and calm as if they were dreaming the houris were fanning them. Naturally ophthalmia is very prevalent. It is very rare indeed that one meets an Egyptian who has both eyes perfect.

All people who come to Cairo should read the

Arabian Nights carefully, not so much for the stories as for the excellent description of the everyday manners and customs which are now, at this moment, seen in all their entirety quite as much as in the days when that book was written. In any one of the crooked streets of the old town one sees the porter of Dinezarde, the three calendars of the story, all of them one-eyed, as if to carry out the exact resemblance; in some one of the corners sits the man with his basket of crockery and glass, probably dreaming on the very same subject as his prototype; the small coffee-shops, the talkative barbers—everything, indeed, is still present. But seeing the actual reality takes away much of the pleasantness, however much it adds to the graphicness, for it would require all the glamour of the most distant romance to enable one to think that any of these muffled-up harridans could be the beauties described in that book, or that the dirty, stinking, shut-up houses could contain the halls of delight that were ever present to our youthful fancies. Thus musing, we passed through the streets into the Grand Mosque at the citadel. The barracks all about here have had British troops in them since the occupation, and an amusing sight it is to see these soldiers, many of them bestriding the small and well-known donkeys of the country, and thoroughly enjoying their ride. The donkey-boys are famed for giving extraordinary names to their donkeys. They have Bismarck, Gladstone, Cornwallis West, Dickey Temple, and so on, and in some curious way they hit on characteristics of the person

whose name they take. For instance, one of them, who owned the donkey Dickey Temple, proclaimed its goodness by shouting out, "Here, take Dickey Temple! He always goes; he never stop work, work; he always go!"

The mosque in the citadel is rather disappointing. It consists of one vast dome, with a large open courtyard towards the east. A certain amount of alabaster is used to line the interior, but it is not carved or decorated in any way. The really only interesting part is the tomb of Mahomed Aly, which is at the south-east corner, it being built on the place where the janissaries were murdered. It was a foul murder because it was done in so treacherous a manner, but there is no doubt that these janissaries, or small landowners of the country, were its tyrants, and that until their death no reform was possible; and however cruel Mahomed Aly was, one cannot help thinking that a little of this energy would have saved Egypt many sufferings in the last few years. On going into the mosque, they made us put on very large red cloth slippers, which caused us to slip about in the most absurd manner, and I could but laugh to think what grotesque figures we must have looked in them. Still, they do allow Christians to enter, thus showing a very different state of things from what it was even at the beginning of this century, when Christians were rigorously excluded, except, as in the mosque at Tunis, where a Christian workman was allowed to enter on all-fours, to repair the clock, "because," as the Sheikh said to his

co-religionists who objected, " in case of repairs, is it not true, O true believers, that a donkey enters this holy place carrying stones on his back ; and is it not also true that one who does not believe in the true religion is an ass and the son of an ass ? Therefore, O brothers, let this man go in as a donkey." From the height here there is a splendid view of Cairo and the surrounding country. It is bounded behind by the Mokattem heights, which rise about two hundred feet above Cairo ; to the left stretches away the little railway of Helouan, where are the sulphur baths ; then from there, looking onwards and to the right, comes the Nile, with its multitude of boats, whose sails prettily reflect the rays of the setting sun. Far away are the Pyramids of Sakkara ; nearer to us loom the great Pyramids, holding steadfastly to their right of being the principal objects of any landscape which contains them. Then come the palaces of Gazeerah ; and next in order Cairo itself, with its teeming population ; while, stretching out to the southward as far as eye can reach, again shimmers the Nile, flowing calmly through an ever-widening tract of magnificent cultivation. It is a curious circumstance with reference to old Cairo that, during the last cholera epidemic, there were very few deaths indeed in it, although it is in the most unsanitary state possible. Boulak, the quarter on the Nile, was the one that suffered most, as many as four hundred dying daily during the height of the disease. Attempts were therefore made to burn down infected closely inhabited parts ; this was also

done to the villages about, which were all hotbeds of the disease. They tell me it is perfectly wonderful how difficult it is to burn down closed-in earth-walled huts, particularly when, as my husband explained to me, they are built in rooms communicating from one to the other by small doors throughout their whole length, and, except these same doors, have no other opening; so the stench, he says, was frightful. All who saw them agreed that the air of Egypt must have a most wonderful health-giving property to enable people who inhabit such holes to live at all.

The great museum of antiquities is at Boulak, pleasantly situated on the banks of the river. The great object of interest to us was the late discovery of the mummies of the twenty-second dynasty. This is the one which contains the Pharaoh that Bible records say was drowned in the Red Sea. Should his particular mummy not be found, it will be an extraordinary and welcome affirmation of the historical correctness of that great Book. The belief which the Egyptians had in the absolute necessity of embalming was owing to their idea that in eternity the body could not come to life again unless all the principal parts were carefully bound up and preserved. Under these circumstances, something very peculiar must have happened to prevent the mummy of one of those powerful kings being laid with those of his dynasty. By-the-by, while talking of that period, I saw this morning a man dressed in one of those many-coloured coats which so

strongly reminds one of Jacob's curious taste in dressing up Joseph in the same way.

While writing this, I was attracted by dogs furiously barking—evidently a tribal dispute, for from my bedroom window I can just see the boundary of the domain between two tribes of dogs. A small bridge separates them, and a most dreadful growling ensues when one or the other tries to pass the limits. I had hardly believed the many stories that have been told of the way different dogs have to stick to their owners but here I daily see the truth of those reports, and can vouch for their not being exaggerated. Quantities of pigeons, too, fly about. Every village has its pigeon-houses, looking like great mud cones, and in the evening the owners go out and call them in. An amusing instance of the usual Egyptian dishonesty was told me the other day. When a man wants to get hold of extra pigeons, he goes out of an evening, but instead of calling them he frightens the pigeons away. They do not understand this, keep circling above, and swoop down now and then towards their houses. Other pigeons, seeing this commotion, join them, and as soon as the man sees there are enough, he hides. The whole of the birds, old and new, then go into the house, and the man, returning, shuts them in. This would be a fine business if it were not that all of them do the same thing, and therefore each gets caught in his turn. They know this perfectly well, but no Egyptian fellah could resist the temptation of cheating his neighbour.

My husband has had a great deal to do to-day

(the 2nd), as the Turkish reserve gendarmes declared their intention of not going to the war. The cause of this, in all probability, is some intrigue on the part of their Egyptian officers, who have the strongest objection to anything in the shape of fighting. It took every one by surprise, as they only made known their determination at the very moment they were called on to parade before the Khedive at the Abdin Palace. The Cairo Battalion of Egyptian Gendarmerie were also to appear before the Khedive at the same time. In the end, about one-third of the Turks thought better of it; but all those who had families and were domiciled in the country absolutely refused to go. The parade was held at 5 p.m., in the Abdin square, the troops marching past the Khedive, who was standing on the balcony of the Palace; General Baker, Sir E. Wood, Cherif Pasha, the Prime Minister, and several of the foreign consuls were with him. After the march was over, the troops formed up in close column facing the Khedive, who sent out a kind message to them by his aide-de-camp. Every one was much pleased with the appearance of the men, who were individually big, strong, and powerful, hardly any under five feet nine; and, having been almost without exception non-commissioned officers in the late Egyptian army, they were very well up in their drill. Their number was about eight hundred. The only question was, would they fight? Many of those who knew best expressed great doubts on the subject, and most others agreed with them when it was found 280 out of the 800 had escaped

from the train while the regiment was on its way to Suez.

No other nation could show such a scene as that which took place at the Cairo station while the men were waiting to start, for between two and three thousand of their relations crowded the whole station, the women and children crying, screaming, and howling, begging their husbands, brothers, etc., not to leave them, not to go to certain death, etc., the soldiers responding, and nearly all crying, like the women themselves. Nothing, indeed, could possibly be more calculated to take every bit of soldier-spirit out of them, even if they had any originally; which I doubt, for the men were not in the least ashamed to cry, nor were they or their officers disinclined to say how odious the present duty was to them, and that, in going into the gendarmerie, they had expected to give up all active service and remain quietly at home. We were not at all astonished to hear of the number of desertions after seeing all this, and that, to prevent such an occurrence in future, martial law is to be declared in force for all troops going to the Soudan from the moment they are under orders.

Our departure for Suakim, which has been put off from day to day, is now definitely fixed for Saturday, the 3rd of December. So we have to repack a few things, leaving the others, with the house, in charge of an excellent Italian servant we have, named Anna Debenac. Before leaving, my husband went with General Baker to say good-bye to the Khedive, who received him most kindly, and

told him that he was going to give him the rank of Pasha, and that he thanked him very much for undertaking to help General Baker in so onerous a task.

We, my step-daughter and myself, went to see the vice-queen, who lives in the Palace of Ismailia. The entrance to her apartment is the one on the left of that going into the Khedive's. As usual in all Mussulman buildings, there are no openings from or to the outside except those absolutely necessary, and however nice the inside may be, nothing of it can be seen by outsiders. The vice-queen's residence is no exception to this rule, for the Khedive is, above all things, a most strict Mussulman. From the outer entrance the carriage goes on about fifty yards, and then turns to the right through an archway, into first an outer and then an inner courtyard. In both these eunuchs are posted at every door. My husband left me when the carriage entered the archway mentioned above. We entered the harem by a double flight of splendid steps meeting in the centre, about fifteen feet above the level of the ground, and then on through a fine hall into the reception-room, to which we were conducted by some white women servants, who were all dressed very plainly, but in bright colours, green and red predominating. The vice-queen herself was seated on a sofa towards the far end of the room, ready to receive her guests. She is very stout, but at the same time very pretty; has fair hair and skin, with dark eyes and eyebrows. Her hands are particularly small and white, and she

looks very aristocratic. She wears on her fingers some very handsome rings. Her hair is arranged according to the present fashion on the top of the head, with a few curls on her forehead. She was dressed in a very striking purple velvet brocade with long train, the whole trimmed with exquisite lace. Her manner was most engaging, quiet, ladylike, and pleasant. When we came in, she rose, shook hands, and asked us to sit down on a sofa near her. She speaks Arabic, Turkish, and French, and is very fond of seeing foreign ladies if they can talk French with her. She began to talk about matters in general, concerning which she seemed to be well informed.

In the meanwhile coffee was brought in, in small china cups without handles, and handed round by a woman attendant. These cups are inserted in filagree gold holders shaped somewhat like hour-glasses. The coffee is made *à la Turque*—that is to say, with all the grounds in it; but, as these latter are very finely ground, they sink to the bottom of the cup, and the clear liquid remains at the top. The vice-queen has four children, two boys and two girls. The girls I did not see, but the boys we often met when driving out. They look bright and intelligent enough, and it is to be hoped that they will get a European education. Their mother seems very fond of them, and she told me about her girls, how that once she had insisted upon the elder girl bathing in the sea, and that the poor child was so frightened that she nearly fainted on coming out. The vice-queen spoke most feelingly about it, and showed all through how

fond she was of them, and how she looked after them. Whilst telling us this a very tall, very black eunuch came in and said a few words in Arabic to her. She answered; then, turning round to me, said, "Madame, votre mari est en bas, parce-qu'il m' envoie ses compliments."

This eunuch was decorated with the Egyptian medal, and looked taller than ever on account of being dressed in a long frock coat. There was nothing particular in the room we were sitting in, which was furnished in crimson and gold, with the walls panelled in gold. The carpet was a Turkish one, and the size of the room prevented the gold from being too staring. While coffee was being served the Comtesse de la Sala came in. She is a Russian by birth, and, like her country-people, speaks several languages very well, amongst them English. She is one of the nicest people in Cairo. I do not know much of the Comte de la Sala, who is A.D.C. to the Khedive, but my husband says the same thing of him. The theme of conversation happened to turn on the cholera, and the vice-queen said how sorry she felt for the poor people who suffered. She seemed to take it as a matter of course that she should have accompanied her husband when he pluckily came up from Alexandria to Cairo, at the time the latter place was at its height of its suffering. She gave one the impression of a kind, gentle, but spirited woman, whose great misfortune was being shut up in a harem, and thus unable to take her part in the outer world. On taking our

leave the vice-queen again shook hands with us, and we got into the carriage and drove out of the court-yard, where we met my husband, who was waiting in an anteroom beyond.

The battalion from Alexandria has just come in. They are to go with us. It is as equally fine a regiment as the Cairo one, and the commandant is Colonel Iskander Bey, an officer who served under General Baker in Turkey.

As we had packed up everything, ready to start, and as my husband was too much engaged to go backwards and forwards from the house at Shoobra to his office, we all met for our meals at the restaurant of the Eshekiah gardens. From what we hear, there is very little to be got at Suakim, so we took care to enjoy the snipe, vegetables, and other good things that Egypt produces at this time of the year. One of the Egyptian officers told me that the other day the Minister of War, Ali Pasha Mobarek, gave a grand *déjeuner* here to all the officers going, at which several of the Egyptians got very lively. One or two speeches were made, a great amount of intention was expressed, and then all broke up, in order that they might seriously begin the work of the expedition.

On the 3rd, in the morning, we sent down all our luggage to the station, the troop-train starting at 7 p.m. We had with difficulty got hold of what appeared to be two good servants, one named William, a Levantine Englishman, who spoke several languages; the other an Egyptian cook.

These were ordered to stay with the baggage and await our arrival. General Baker and several officers and friends were going to see us off, and so we went quietly down at six o'clock, thinking to be in time, when to our astonishment we heard a whistle, and saw the train moving along, amidst a prolonged howl from thousands of natives, assembled as before to see the men off. It then turned out that General Baker, wishing to put an abrupt end to this disagreeable scene, which could not otherwise than dishearten the soldiers, sent off the train suddenly. It was a very good plan as far as the soldiers were concerned, but, unfortunately for us, our paragon William had begun a series of thinking by ensconcing himself in a waggon with all our baggage, without troubling in the least as to our being present or not, and saying afterwards that he thought we were coming all right. So there was nothing for it but to go to Shepheard's Hotel and stay there the night. General Baker told my husband that in any case he wished him not to leave by that train, as he had some last orders to give him.

That evening there was a grand assemblage on the hotel piazza, amongst them several Egyptian army officers, English, who naturally were all wishing to go to the war, and could not understand why the gendarmerie went, while the army were carefully kept back. A joke was passed round that it was "Wood's" army and therefore "wouldn't" go! I expect, though, that if Sir E. Wood had really his wish, he and his army would be in Suakim now.

By-the-by, I heard another *bon mot* of poor Colonel Morice Bey, the one who was afterwards killed, when Sir E. Malet left, and the first news came that Sir E. Baring was coming. He said with reference to both Sir *Evelyn* Wood and Sir *Evelyn* Baring, "Poor Egypt! there is one great evil in Egypt now; what will she do with another bigger evil still?" In the morning my husband went to General Baker's, and saw there Colonel Messadeglia Bey, an officer who had served under General Gordon in the Soudan, and had compiled most of the list of Arab tribes and their Sheikhs, which is alluded to in Colonel Stewart's most excellent report.

As a last thing before leaving, my husband drove over to the Ministry of the Interior to say good-bye to Mr. Clifford Lloyd, who was most civil and pleasant, wishing him all luck, and saying that he would much have liked to have gone himself, although he thought that few of the English officers would ever come back again. On arriving at the station, we found it crowded by officers and friends, waiting to see us off. General Baker was also there, and said he hoped to join us at Suakim in about ten days, but that he would not leave Cairo till he had seen everything go before, or in such a state of preparation that there could be no doubt of its reaching its destination. His parting instructions to my husband were—"On no account to advance until he himself arrived," but that everything that could be done by means of money should be tried,

as soon as ever he landed. Also the troops were to be under his command; no orders were to be taken from the Egyptian authorities out there. At 11 a.m., the 4th of December, the train moved off, amidst general good wishes from all present. Four English non-commissioned officers who had been promoted to lieutenants in the Egyptian army came in the same train with us. They were to be used as scouts—a most important duty, and one which requires a large amount of pluck and coolness to carry out properly, for not only have they to point out the position of the enemy, but they ought to be able to make a very good guess of the numbers that they have seen.

Almost the whole route has already been described. The extra short distance from Nefish to Suez, being merely a run through the desert, requires no comment except as regards the beautiful blue waters of the Bitter Lakes, whose splendid colouring is brought out by the rich yellow of the surrounding desert. They say that these lakes teem with fish, but I saw no boats on either of them. We arrived at Suez about an hour after dark, and then were taken on by a special engine to the docks, where we found the *Zagazig* all in readiness to start. Our luggage and servant were there all right. William had only the most stupid excuses to make, and began soon to show that he, like all the rest of his tribe, required some one to wait on him, instead of his waiting on us. The cabins allotted to us on the steamer were very good, but although the night was dark, the frightful stinks everywhere

proclaimed it an Egyptian steamer, manned by an Egyptian crew, with the unpleasant addition of a crowd of native soldiery. It was found, of course, that there was not sufficient food on board for the first-class passengers, and at the last moment we had to wait two hours before a fair start could be made. During that time careful guards were put on by Colonel Iskander Bey, to prevent any desertion. The men were informed of their being under martial law, but in spite of all that one managed to disappear, and it took some time before he was caught again. He was not tried by court-martial, because he might possibly have fallen asleep at the place where he was found, and though circumstances were very suspicious against him, yet possibly his excuse might have been true, for he looked such a fool. At 11 p.m. we started, so good-bye to Egypt for a time.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAHDI AND GENERAL HICKS PASHA.

THE MAHDI'S EARLY TRAINING—HIS PIETY—HE CLAIMS POWER AS A GREAT SHEIKH—STATE OF THE SOUDAN—HIS FIRST VICTORIES—HICKS PASHA—HIS DIFFICULTIES—INTENDED SOUDAN COMMITTEE—EXPEDITION TO GEBEL-AIN—STEAMERS LAID UP FOR WANT OF FUEL—EGYPTIAN TROOPS OBJECT TO OUTPOSTS—EXTRACT FROM HICKS'S DESPATCH ABOUT HIS SKIRMISH AT MARABIA—COL. FARQUHAR'S CORRESPONDENCE—REPORT RESPECTING YUSEF PASHA'S MARCH FROM FASHODA—DESTRUCTION OF HIS FORCE FOR WANT OF GUARDS—MR. O'DONOVAN—MR. POWER—DIFFICULTIES ABOUT WATER—DISGRACEFUL REINFORCEMENTS.

To explain properly how the Suakim expedition came about, it will be necessary to go back to the events in Egypt during the last twelve months. The landing of the British army, the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, the masterly political and strategical movements of Lord Wolseley, are known to all in England. But it is not so well known that the troubles in the Soudan, Kordofan, and the equatorial provinces, had commenced about that time. Had Arabi been really a patriot, the small rising that it was then could have been suppressed at once; for the Mahdi, or Saviour, was then but a very unimportant man, with a very small following. As Colonel Stewart in his

excellent reports relates, a detachment commanded by two Egyptian officers could easily have made him a prisoner if these two wretched Egyptians had not quarrelled at the last moment, and allowed themselves to be surprised.

The Mahdi, whose name is Achmet, was born in the province of Dongola; his father was a carpenter by trade. When Achmet was about twelve years old he began to disapprove of work, and went up to Khartoum to join his uncle. While there he made another bolt, and attached himself to the following of a Sheikh. These Sheikhs are a peculiar institution in the Soudan; they are supposed to be men under the special protection of a particular angel of God, whose interposition is effected by the Sheikh having isolated himself for eight or nine hours daily during a term of years, and constantly repeating all that time one of the ninety-nine names of God. After a period, as described when writing about the howling dervishes, the individual in question declares himself invested with the power of the angel, and it is supposed that he has received some occult intimation to the effect that God has ordered this angel to be his faithful slave, and to obey all his wishes. The devotee then takes the name and dignity of Sheikh, collects a following of dervishes round him, and proceeds to live upon the offerings of other people. It was in this way that Achmet went on.

After staying some time with his Sheikh, and learning by heart a considerable part of the Koran, he started by himself to the island of Abba in the

White Nile. Here he stayed several years in a cave for many hours a day; he muttered or yelled the name of Allah (God); he fasted often and long, dressed in the most scanty and dirty clothes, and in every way fulfilled the Mussulman idea of a great religious fanatic. At last he emerged from this retreat, and commenced to claim power as a great Sheikh; and then, seeing his following increase very rapidly, he gradually began to claim power as the Mahdi. The times also helped him very much, for Egypt was just then in the throes of Arabi's rebellion. The Soudan was left to itself, and consequently more than ever misgoverned by the Egyptian authorities who were there. The Turkish Bashi-Bazouks, who, before the time of Gordon, kept the country quiet by wholesale bullying and tyranny, had been abolished by that general. No force was, however, left to make up for them. The Egyptian troops were willing enough to do the tyranny and bullying part, but fighting was quite another thing; consequently the Mahdi, obtaining some small successes at the beginning, rapidly increased his party, particularly when he declared against the Egyptian Government and against the payment of taxes.

There was also another thing that militated against the constituted authorities, namely, the abolition of the slave trade, and the taxing of the lands, villages, etc., held by the Sheikhs or other religious communities. The taxes used before to be paid in kind; money was not an available article. The Egyptian Government tried to change this, and

insisted on money; and thus it became the custom, when a certain country was assessed, that the inhabitants should collect and hand over a number of slaves to some one of the great slave-traders who passed that way. From them they got bills on Khartoum, and so the taxes were paid with no other trouble than what they had been accustomed to from time immemorial, viz. a yearly slave-hunting expedition.

Just about the time that this means of payment became no longer possible, owing to the pressure put on Egypt to abolish slave-trading, and her loyal efforts to fulfil her obligations, the taxes were greatly increased on account of the religious properties becoming very much more extensive, and, according to custom, being exempted from taxation; thus, while the Government demand remained constant, the area of land taxed diminished so rapidly that even the fanatical Egyptian authorities began to think that religious lands could be let off their burden no longer. Every one then became discontented, everybody's personal interest was touched in its tenderest point, religious questions came into play, and just at this moment Achmet's pretensions to being the Mahdi were put forward. No event could have been more opportune for him, especially as all the traditions of the Mussulman world point out that year as the year of the true Mahdi's coming. He defeated the various few small expeditions that were sent against him without any difficulty. The Egyptian soldiers, there is no doubt, began to believe in him;

they attributed magical powers to him, and declared that whenever they fired against him or his troops the powder changed to water and the bullet dropped close by.

During Arabi's rebellion, and the English occupation, no attention was paid to the Soudan, and the Mahdi was enabled, in the end of 1882, to gather a large force together in Kordofan, invest Bala and Obeid, and at last take both those towns with hardly any loss to himself, although garrisoned by a very strong Egyptian force. In these places were considerable stores of ammunition, rifles, and guns; it is not, therefore, astonishing that the prestige of the Mahdi increased to such an extent that his every word was considered sacred. How could it be otherwise, when all his followers were not even armed with spears and swords, but many had only sticks, and yet found themselves without loss in possession of all these, to them, wonderful things. The Mahdi further kept up his reputation by living as simply as ever, dressing as badly, and praying as much. He was also sharp enough politically, as he spared and treated well all those that gave themselves up to him and acknowledged his divine mission.

These latter events, the taking of Obeid and Bala, happened last year, just at the time when the Khedive had determined to try and stem the Mahdi's progress by sending up a few English officers to remodel his forces in the Soudan. First amongst them was Colonel Hicks, late A.A.G., Bombay

Army. He had not much experience in active service, but had possessed the reputation of being an all-round excellent officer. The officers who were selected to accompany him were all from the retired list, it having been determined by the English Government, for some reason, that none of the active list should go. One would have thought that in a time like this the little help that was given would have been given in as ungrudging a manner as possible, and that Egypt would have had the choice of the whole range of officers on any and every list, and thus been able to get the best possible. As it was, General Hicks, for he was made a Pasha, got a certain amount of guns and cavalry, was appointed chief of the staff in the Soudan, and started off with special orders that the Delta of Senaar, between the two Niles, should be the first part of the country brought into order. General Baker and Sir Samuel, his brother, who had been specially consulted by the Khedive in this matter, both urged General Hicks not to attempt moving beyond the Nile, because, while there with the river steamers in his possession, his power for attack or defence was very great, but any movement away from those rivers enormously decreased his strength, owing to the great difficulties he would have to encounter from want of water in the arid districts.

General Hicks had, however, the greatest troubles to contend with. The English Government kept telling him that they were in no way responsible for anything he might do or any risk he might run;

at the same time, they interfered so much with all the arrangements that he could not but think that he was under their control. He trusted, when he left, that General Baker would have the entire management as far as the Egyptian Government were concerned. I believe that the latter intended that this should be the case; and there is no doubt that a Soudan committee was at one time contemplated, the principal member of which was to have been General Baker. Unfortunately, this most sensible idea was not carried out, and so poor Hicks rushed unrestrainedly on to his fate. It will hardly be believed that even direct correspondence in an official manner between General Hicks and Baker Pasha was objected to. When General Hicks went up to Khartoum, he found his position of chief of the staff quite untenable, for, though all would listen, none would take his advice. It was only by threats of resignation that he at last obtained the necessary power. This he made use of by organizing an expedition down the Blue Nile to Gebel-Ain, the double mountain, where he met and defeated one of the principal of the rebel chiefs. Even on this short expedition, which lasted only a month, he was twice delayed for provisions, and yet the Nile was navigable along its whole length for steamers, and the wind at this time of the year blows permanently from a northerly direction. Several times the steamers were laid up at different points, waiting for fuel, although in almost every case the day before they had run out of wood they

had passed some depôt or a forest where the fuel was usually procured from. Even as it was, in the small skirmishes which occurred in this expedition, he complained of the way the Egyptian soldiers fired in the air; how absolutely callous they were as regards sentries and outposts, the highest officers objecting, as they said the poor men would thus be placed in dangerous positions! A few extracts from General Hicks's letters and his chief of the staff, Colonel Farquhar's, correspondence, will give a good idea of the troubles they had to contend with.

The first of them, dated the 6th of May, reports his action at Marabia, and is as follows:—

"Cairo, May 6.

"To his Excellency the Minister of War,

"EXCELLENCY,

"You will have received, through the telegrams from me, which I requested might be communicated to you, and from those of his Excellency Aladdin Pasha, Governor-General of the Soudan, the intelligence of our victory over the rebels near Marabia. On account of the great difficulty in obtaining any information, I preceded the main body of the army on its leaving Kawa, and with a small force proceeded up the river to reconnoitre and to take possession of the ford at Abuzed. On arrival at the ford, I found it in possession of a small body of Arabs, which I had no difficulty in dislodging. On the 23rd of April I remained there, placing the boats which I had brought up with me, containing Bashi-Bazouks under

command of Yahia Bey, who is an excellent officer, in echelon across the stream, in which position they could command a very considerable length of the ford, which extends for about a mile, and support one another in case of an attempt at a forced passage. Having made these dispositions, I left on the morning of the 24th for a reconnaissance up to Gebel-Ain. On reaching the ambatch woods to the south of the ford, I discovered a large number of stacks of ambatch ready cut and prepared for raft-making on an extensive scale. A party was landed, and the whole of them were burned. These stacks had evidently been prepared by the rebels for use in the event of their being obliged to cross. On proceeding up the river, we found the banks occupied by straggling groups of Arabs, with whom we exchanged shots. On the 24th I visited the Shillock village of Mozran, having already arranged with the Sheikh for information to be obtained of the enemies' movements. I learned here that the rebels had left Gebel-Ain, and were marching in force under Ameer Makushfi and many dervishes to attack the 'Turks' on their march from Kawa. Having ascertained that the information was correct, I steamed back to the ford of Abuzed, warned Yahir Bey, and during the night I dropped down the river to join the army. I found the army at the north end of the island of Abba, and, with Colonel Farquhar and Captain Evans, joined it. In the evening the rebel cavalry appeared, and were driven back with a few shells. On the 27th of April we

received information from a spy whom we captured, and also from other sources, that the enemy intended to attack us on that day; so, as we were in a good open position, and in front the country was wooded and unfavourable, I determined to remain and await the attack. But the night passed, and, with the exception of a few false alarms, nothing occurred. We advanced on the 28th, and on the 29th, before we had reached the unfavourable ground, Colonel Farquhar, whom I had sent with a few native Bashi-Bazouks to reconnoitre, returned with the information that the enemy were about two miles in our front, and were advancing at a rapid rate. In about a quarter of an hour after they appeared in considerable force, cavalry and infantry, and spread out round our flanks with the view of surrounding the square. They then advanced steadily and quickly, led, we could see, by several chiefs on horseback, with banners borne before them. There was some delay and difficulty in getting our guns into action, but at last this was effected, and the range being accurately estimated, at once the very first shell burst in the centre of some cavalry, a second was also effective, and this seems to have caused them, the cavalry, to move rapidly off to our right flank, and eventually off the field, for they appeared no longer as a compact body. The infantry still came on boldly, and, although shot down in numbers, succeeded in getting close enough to the square to throw their spears into it. There were not many armed with rifles, but two of our men were killed by

rifle-shots. I fancy the enemy fired high, as I am afraid our own troops did to a considerable extent. The action lasted for about half an hour, and the troops of his Highness behaved well and steadily. I estimated the strength of the enemy attacking us at the time to be between four and five thousand, but I have reason now to believe that I much underrated it. The enemy's loss in killed was about five hundred, with the Makushfi and six other chiefs; the wounded many. Our loss was trivial, viz. two killed and five wounded. Had I only had some cavalry I could have inflicted severe loss, as the enemy was completely broken up and fled in confusion."

In Colonel Farquhar's correspondence he mentions, on July 16, that the rebel forces about Senaar were dispersed, but it is evident that the Mahdi was in full power, for most of these Arab chiefs were with him. He says, since Lord Dufferin's departure from Egypt it is believed here that Hicks Pasha has lost his support at head-quarters, and therefore every obstruction is placed in his way. Slaten Bey had gathered together a certain number of men and defeated the Hami Arabs, who were not strong enough to attack the Mahdi al-Abeid. He also gives a copy of the report respecting the march of Yusef Pasha from Fashoda on the White Nile to Gebel Gedir.

It shows how utterly without precaution was the above Pasha's march.

The want of discipline is quite extraordinary; but the extract given below speaks for itself, and only makes one astounded that any Egyptian troops ever escape. Fancy the Pasha listening to his subordinate, Mahomed Suleiman Bey! It is really wonderful.

"A shower of rain caused us to halt for the day. Next day, after halting, the rebel scouts surprised and killed four of our men who had strayed from the camp. We again marched, and at 3 p.m. we came to a *khor* called Wagga, with open country all around, and free from trees. Here Yusef Pasha decided to remain for the night. Mahomed Suleiman Bey, however, said, 'No; we'll go on and camp near Gerada, and remain there a day or two.' After a little conversation between the two, the army marched on until 5 p.m., and camped without making a *zeriba* on the edge of a wood. Some officers and a few mounted men were sent to the village to procure news from the natives, and to assure them that they would not be molested so long as they were friendly to the Government. Whilst the officers were being entertained by the head men, a body of soldiers from the camp entered the village and looted everything they could find. Thereupon the head men turned out and attacked the officers and escort, killing three of them. When this news reached Yusef Pasha, he sent a faki to explain the mistake, and at the same time he pardoned them for having killed the three men. While the faki was in the village, a native came to say that the place was surrounded by fifty

of the rebel cavalry, and that the natives would be punished for having communicated with the troops. The enemy was two hours distant behind two mountains, and the road leading there passed between the two hills. It was now dark. The Pasha ordered three hundred men to occupy this mountain-pass, and stop the rebels from sending reinforcements.

Mahomed Suleiman Bey objected to have the order carried out, saying that operations of the kind could not be done at night, and so the matter ended, and everybody went off to sleep. Early next morning, just when day was breaking, and when almost all the men were asleep, the rebels appeared at a distance of fifty yards. They rushed on to the camp, breaking through the front-face and killing a number of men as they passed over them. Then followed a scene which baffles description. The soldiers, half asleep, picked up their rifles and shot friend and foe indiscriminately. Women were crying, and the din and confusion were so great that even the rebels temporarily retired from the scene, followed by our men, who were immediately surrounded by the enemy and killed to a man. Those who had remained behind fled in confusion, abandoning everything to the rebels, including the women. Some eight hundred men managed to get away, but the majority of these were afterwards made prisoners and are now in slavery. I succeeded in reaching Fashoda, whence I came here in the steamer *Suffia* about three months ago."

Here ends Ali Busiri's narrative. What Ali

Busiri relates occurred last year. The Egyptians lost 3,600 men killed in the affair.

On July 31 mention is made of Mr. O'Donovan, the celebrated correspondent of the *Daily News*, having arrived at Khartoum. Also of Mr. Power, of the *Pictorial World*.

August 15 he writes about the difficulties they are under as regards the carriage of water; it is well worth perusal. As to the reinforcements he speaks of, it is quite true that they were the most miserable, weakly set of men. They were brought down from Upper Egypt in chains, and encamped at the barage of the Nile, about thirty miles below Cairo, and there remained till after the cholera was over.

"The force will most likely march into Kordofan the beginning of September, but the route has not been decided as yet, or if it has, it is kept secret. The great scarcity of water throughout Kordofan makes the marching of an army through the country a matter of great difficulty. During the rainy season water at some places collects in the hollows of the ground, but the rains are not like the monsoon of India. A heavy downpour once a week, and lasting for about two hours, is about what takes place, but this year there has been but little rain, and even where it usually collects in pools there is scarcely any water. The soil is sandy, and there is no underlying impervious strata, so the rain is absorbed, and water not to be obtained even by digging wells. So the force will have to trust to known watering-places where there are wells. But

these wells are very few in number, three or four, generally 30 to 40 metres deep (say 90 to 120 feet), and on the approach of an enemy the Arabs always fill them in. Anyhow, if they were left unfilled, the difficulties would be great, as the following calculation will show. As water has to be *carried* on several marches, it is necessary to take a large number of transport animals, say 6,000 animals to 6,000 men, counting all. Each horse, bullock, or mule drinks a gallon and a half of water at a time, and takes three minutes to do so. To water 6,000 animals twice a day, 18,000 gallons of water are required. To water 5,000 camels once a day, and 1,000 horses and mules twice a day, 7,500 + 3,000 = 10,500 gallons. Add for 6,000 men, at one gallon each, 6,000 gallons: total 16,500 gallons daily. Say each skin draws up 1 gallon, the well 30 metres deep, one minute to let down and draw up, five skins working at a time, 5 gallons would be brought up every minute, 15 gallons in three minutes (time taken by animals to drink). Ten animals could therefore be watered at a time, or 200 in an hour, and 4,800 in twenty-four hours. One well, 30 metres deep, with five skins working, each lifting 1 gallon, taking one minute to let down and haul up, will furnish 300 gallons an hour, or 7,200 gallons in the twenty-four hours. So it would take two days and eight hours to give the force one day's supply of water. Three wells working twenty-four hours would, allowing for waste, supply the force. Nine wells working eight hours

would do the same, each, be it remembered, having five buckets always at work, and no wells running dry, which incident generally occurs. The wells are so narrow that it is doubtful if five buckets could work at once. We have no chain or other pumps, and if we had the wells would be too narrow to work them in, if not too deep. So, you see, the water supply is a hard nut to crack. It can only be met by taking the force up by degrees in small parties. Thus, with the quality of troops we have, it is dangerous. The Arabs are bold and brave. However, we fully calculate upon success. A very obstructive old gentleman, Suleiman Pasha, the Egyptian general, has been removed; and Aladdin Pasha, the governor-general, will accompany the army as nominal commander-in-chief, General Hicks's orders and disposition being obeyed and carried out under instructions received from the Khedive to that effect. The reinforcements which arrived from Cairo were inspected to-day by the general. We are thankful that they will remain in garrison, for they are a miserable-looking lot of men, mostly old and bent double. General Sir Evelyn Wood, when he inspected them before their departure, removed a number from the ranks. They are no doubt perfectly wretched: they have been seized in their villages, and sent off to what they look upon as transportation for life. No one but a Pasha ever returns from the Soudan; he does so with his pockets well lined, and unfortunately there are many Pashas."

From all the above, the success of the Kordofan expedition was always more than doubtful. Sir Samuel Baker foretold the exact result, almost before the troops had started. He and his brother were altogether against it, unfortunately, as the sequel proves. General Hicks did not follow this advice, and the disaster that all know of befell him; for the Mahdi, acting with great forethought, allowed him to advance with hardly any hindrance, until, exhausted and worn with the march, the Egyptian troops were treacherously decoyed into a waterless ravine, seven miles from Obeid, and there destroyed, almost to the last man.

CHAPTER IV.

TOKAR AND SINKAT.

SULEIMAN PASHA—SOUDAN FORTRESSES—DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIANS—MAHOMED TAHIR PASHA—RELIEF SENT TO TOKAR—OSMAN DIGMA'S CLAIM TO DIRECT INSPIRATION—ANOTHER EGYPTIAN REVERSE.

THE news of the disaster to Hicks Pasha spread like wildfire through all the Soudan, west and east, and in the country about. The road from Suakim to Berber and thence to Khartoum, *viâ* the Nile, which forms the great tradè route to Central Africa, became instantly unsafe, commotions ensued everywhere, culminating, in Eastern Soudan, into the rise of the Mahdi's brother-in-law, Osman Digma, the beleaguering of the towns of Sinkat and Tokar, and even of Suakim itself.

Suleiman Pasha, having been removed from Khartoum, became the Governor-General of Eastern Soudan, a vast district which extends from Suakim to Massowah along the coast of the Red Sea and inland to the Mokran river. To him is principally due that the insurrection round about him took such great proportions. The Pasha is a thorough speci-

men of the old Turk—a very brave man, but one who would never take time by the forelock or wisdom by the experience of others; his pet aversion, too, being action on his own responsibility. Nobody can tell what induced him to do so, but he left a garrison of four hundred men, with all their women and children, at Sinkat. Now, the latter place has no strategical value whatever, nor has it any commercial; it is merely a hill where a small number of the richer inhabitants of Suakim used to spend the few months of extreme heat. All the principal roads of the country lie away from it, and to approach it from Suakim several desperate ravines have to be passed. Suleiman Pasha himself was at Sinkat until the first days in November, and then, finding that his policy of doing nothing, whether as to putting down the rebellion forcibly or redressing the just grievances of the Arab tribes, was raising a hornet's nest about him, he began to be afraid of getting shut in; so placing Tewfik Bey, the Governor of Suakim, in command of this absolutely unimportant place, he made a bolt of it himself, and came down.

At this point we come to the one grand and noble man who stands forth so prominently amongst all the horde of Egyptian officials; but we shall have to mention him and his post so often hereafter that we will now pass on, merely noting that the fortifications of Sinkat, occupied by the troops there, were composed of two or three moderate-sized stone buildings used as barracks, the whole surrounded by a simple earthen parapet and ditch, and lying in the centre

of a sort of small plain enclosed by hills on all sides. Its distance from Suakim is about forty-four miles, and scanty water is met with only twice along the route. Tokar, the other place about which we have heard so much, is fifty-four miles from Suakim, and is the one fertile spot in these regions, the reason being that its situation is in a kind of extensive depression; the water from the hills round about, accumulating here, thus keeps a series of extensive wells always full. The products are cotton and the grain they call *doora*, a kind of millet, the latter of which grows on enormous cane-like stalks, which, chopped up, form a capital food for cattle. The town itself, relatively to the rest of the country, is rather a large one, but the garrison was collected in a fort, composed of the usual barracks for the soldiers; and, as this place is the head-quarters of a sub-district, there were also the necessary Government buildings and a few mud huts for the women and children. A large and deep ditch with good parapet runs round the above buildings, leaving the town outside.

In November, 1883, when Suleiman Pasha left Sinkat, he was fully aware that the station was so badly provisioned as to require instant relief; and, indeed, he went off on pretence that he was going to see to this being done immediately. It never struck him, or he did not care to think, that the place was not worth defending, and ought to have been evacuated the instant the first sign of danger appeared on the horizon. Instead of this, he set himself about making languid negotiations with the chief of the

Shaier, a scoundrel called Mahomed Aly, to reprovision the place. The latter may have been sincere at the time, and there is no doubt that, had provisions been sent up as soon as the Pasha came down, there would have been no difficulty as far as the hostile tribes were concerned. But Suleiman kept on haggling over trifles, and sending for leave to Cairo to act, until the precious moments had passed, and Mahomed Aly would no longer undertake the business. He was then obliged to send up a detachment of two hundred troops with a small convoy. This detachment advanced in the usual fashion, with no advance-guard, no scouts, and without taking any of the necessary precautions when moving through an enemy's country, particularly when that enemy's mode of attack by surprise was well known.

According to all accounts, the doomed men marched on, without any formation, their arms hung on to the camels, their officers loitering behind, right into a gorge, the sloping sides of which were covered with large rocks and stones fallen from the hills above. Here the enemy had hidden themselves, and were not discovered by the Egyptian soldiers till a considerable part of these latter had actually passed. The enemy then sprang on to them, and an absolute massacre took place. The women and children who accompanied the soldiers alone escaped, to become the slaves of their captors. Thus the only consequence of Suleiman Pasha's tardy action was the destruction of a small body of his own troops, and, what was far more important,

giving the Arabs the first strong idea of their invincibility, and so turning men who had hitherto had a considerable respect for the soldier armed with a breech-loader, although an Egyptian, into a set of fierce fanatics, who later on proved their heroic bravery on our English squares. The news of this defeat was carried into Sinkat by a rebel messenger, who, in the name of Osman Digma, summoned Tewfik and the garrison to surrender. It was then the latter gave his memorable answer—"His life was the Khedive's, his honour his own, his daughter the Effendina had promised to look after, and that therefore he intended to defend the place to the last." So noble an answer has rarely been made, and never surpassed. His subsequent conduct has proved it no empty boast, and has greatly excited the deep commiseration and interest of England, and, indeed, of all the world, for the brave man's fate.

The next important event was the arrival of Mahomed Tahir Pasha at Suakim, as commander of the troops under Suleiman. Mahomed Tahir had hitherto been employed in the Cairo municipality as sub-prefect. He was a pleasant, gentlemanly looking man of about forty, who could speak a little French. He showed considerable energy while at Cairo, and was therefore chosen out for advancement, and so, being promoted to Pasha, came to Suakim. Shortly after his arrival, it was determined to send relief to Tokar. For that purpose six hundred men were picked out and moved to Trinkitat

by means of the Egyptian ships *Gafferiah* and *Tor*, Trinkitat being a landing-place on the sea-shore eighteen miles distant from Tokar. This was the expedition that was accompanied by Captain Moncreiff, R.N., H.B.M.C., for Eastern Soudan. The troops marched off in the morning, and, moving in the ordinary way, found themselves suddenly attacked by the enemy, who lay in ambush close to the now renowned Teb. The Egyptian soldiers, as usual, made an immediate bolt, throwing away their arms and even their clothes. They never stopped until they reached the sea-shore; there they crowded into any boats they could catch hold of, and some even swam to the vessels. It is unnecessary to say that no enemy were within miles of them. With the expedition were a few Turkish Bashi-Bazouks and some Greeks, the latter being merchants who took this opportunity of going up on business to Tokar. Most of them fell with Consul Moncreiff. The commander, Mahomed Tahir, in his report, states that he tried every means to rally the troops, but found it impossible to do so; and, it being evident that all who remained behind had been killed, he thought it best to return to Suakim. At the time many people were inclined to greatly blame Mahomed Tahir, but now things are better known, and there is no doubt that rallying Egyptian troops is an utter impossibility. The unfortunate issue of the affair still further encouraged the Arabs and strengthened their belief in the power of Osman Digma, who now began to claim direct inspiration,

saying he was thus favoured, in answer to the prayers of the Mahdi; and not only that, but he also declared that, through the same interposition, the power had been granted to him of causing the powder of the troops to become water, as in the case when Hicks's troops fought the Mahdi. Other bad effects followed this reverse, and the Egyptian troops were so discouraged that, when a day or two afterwards there was a false alarm of an attack by Osman Digma on Suakim, the men left their posts and bolted into the town, and hid themselves under tables, behind divans—in fact, in every conceivable corner.

Suleiman Pasha told my husband it was with the greatest difficulty they were persuaded that no enemy were near, and that it was safe to return to the walls. Another and still more important effect was, that Suleiman Pasha and Mahomed Tahir Pasha, both fearing the effects of the news at Cairo, and hearing that an expedition under General Baker was about to be sent, determined to try another throw of the dice with a fine regiment of 600 Soudanese, under Major Kassim, that had been hurriedly sent for from Massowah. These blacks were most anxious to meet the enemy, and, unfortunately, this just suiting the two Pashas' views, they sent the regiment out with grandiose orders to bring in Osman Digma's head. With these 600 blacks were fifty cavalry and one gun; twenty-six regimental and two staff officers, Major Izzet Effendi and Captain Ebraim Effendi; also 200 Egyptian soldiers.

The whole started off early on the morning of the 2nd of December, 1883, and they advanced towards Tamaneb, and got into the small ravines, the sides of which, overgrown as they are with the umbrella mimosa, form the best possible cover for an enemy whose attack is invariably by surprise. The cavalry, according to its old traditions, stuck close to the infantry instead of scouting. After three or four hours' march, a few of the enemy were seen, and the gun was twice fired at them. After that, for about a mile, no one appearing, little more seems to have been thought of the enemy, till all of a sudden, while the troops were marching through the centre of a steepish ravine, they suddenly came upon some twenty men, who began to beat tomtoms in front of them. Major Cassim ordered a few of his men to fire, and drive them away. The order was obeyed; the enemy bolted, and the whole regiment rushed helter-skelter after them, only to find themselves in the arms of the enemy. The cavalry and staff-officers ran away immediately, and no accurate account has ever been had of the battle. All we know is that only thirty-seven of the infantry escaped. It is also said that the fight lasted several hours, but that seems hardly probable. The news was brought in by Izzet Effendi to Mahomed Tahir, who was on board the *Tor*, where he had taken up his abode, and had just begun thinking of sending out the reinforcements which should have gone two hours before. The disaster, on becoming known, caused so desperate a panic in Suakim, that Osman Digma might have marched in

at any moment without the loss of a single man. Fortunately, on the 4th of December Colonel Harington, with the first detachment of Baker's expedition, arrived, and immediately began to throw up defensive lines to prevent a rush on the town. This now brings us up to time as far as the expedition is concerned, and we must once more return to Cairo.

CHAPTER V.

THE GENDARMERIE.

THE GENDARMERIE—ARRIVAL OF GENERAL BAKER IN EGYPT—ORGANIZATION OF THE GENDARMERIE—ARRIVAL OF SIR EVELYN WOOD TO FORM THE ARMY—THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS CLASH—THE SORRY QUALITY OF THE EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS—BAKER PASHA'S PLANS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE FORCE—GENDARMERIE FOR THE PROVINCES—POLICE FOR THE TOWNS—RESERVE OF TURKS FOR FIGHTING PURPOSES—SIGNAL SUCCESS OF SCHEME FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS—OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA—ARMY USELESS—CORDONS ENTRUSTED SOLELY TO GENDARMERIE—ARRIVAL OF MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD, WHO WISHES TO CHANGE THE GENDARMERIE INTO ENGLISH POLICEMEN—UNSUITABILITY OF HIS PLANS TO PEOPLE LIKE THE EGYPTIANS—INCREASE OF CRIME IN CONSEQUENCE—APPEAL FOR HELP IN THE SOUDAN—WOOD'S ARMY WOULD NOT GO—THE KHEDIVE APPLIES TO GENERAL BAKER PASHA, WHO RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTS THE COMMAND—REASONS FOR THIS OBJECTION—ENGLISH AUTHORITIES IN EGYPT—ZEBEHR PASHA—HIS SON KILLED BY GENERAL GORDON, WHO REMOVED ALL THE BASHI-BAZOUKS.

AFTER the British occupation of Egypt, it was determined to re-establish the constitutional forces of the country, whether as regarded peace or war. Lord Dufferin, in his celebrated despatch, points out how this should be done. Accordingly, the army and gendarmerie, especially the latter, being required immediately, his Highness the Khedive sent to General

Baker, and requested him to come over from Constantinople, organize, and command these forces for him. This course would scarcely have been undertaken by the Khedive unless, at least, the tacit approval of the English Government had first been obtained. With considerable difficulty, General Baker answered the call, the Turkish Government being most unwilling, and placing every hindrance in the way, especially by not answering the General's application for leave, so at last the latter went on board ship and let the leave follow. On arriving at Cairo, he immediately set to work, it being most important to organize something, and to give employment to the numerous officers and others who had been more or less faithful to the Khedive. Besides, the first requirement in any country is a suitable peace force. Hardly, however, had Baker Pasha settled down to his work, when for some inexplicable reason it was found that officers on active service in England could not be seconded to serve under him (though officers on active service in India could), and therefore the English Government decided to send out Sir E. Wood to command the army, and to leave General Baker only the gendarmerie. Still, before leaving the army, the general idea of organization may here be mentioned, viz. regiments of 800 to 1,000 men, half of them commanded entirely by native officers, the other half having an English brigadier, and to each regiment two English officers. By this means it was intended to create emulation between the regiments thus differently constituted. The artillery were all looked

after by English officers, the cavalry the same as the infantry. Sir E. Wood also determined to make all the nation *soldiers*, and therefore elaborated a system of four years' service with the colours, then so many with the reserves, etc., etc.

There was one benefit, though, in this, namely, that in former times, once a soldier always a soldier, and therefore the wretched fellah who was drawn in the conscription looked upon himself as completely lost. This was now changed, the term of service being limited. Already this year a considerable number will have gone back to their homes, so the Egyptian fellah may possibly begin to place some faith in Feringee promises. The officers Sir E. Wood has with him are, by common report, the very best possible. He himself is said to be the smartest of the whole, and most energetic in whatever he undertakes. The effects of his administration are self-evident, for a better appointed, more soldier-like lot of men it is impossible to find. The one thing needed—courage—is, however, wanting in the Egyptian of the day, or indeed of any days. This unfortunate failing no general, however good he may be, can put into his men. And it therefore becomes a question whether all this trouble and talent, together with the great expense, is of any use whatever. As the foreigners say, soldiers are intended to fight, and the dirtiest, most ragged fighting set of men are better than a regiment who will not. There was, further, this difference, that whereas in former times the army were scattered

about the country, and performed many duties that more properly belonged to the peace forces, now they were assembled together in Cairo in order that they might obtain the best and fullest instruction in military work in the shortest space of time.

Having thus shortly described the army, we now come to the gendarmerie, a force with which General Baker and my husband were most directly concerned. General Baker's original plan was a semi-military force for the provinces; a somewhat more civilian police for the great towns of Cairo and Alexandria; and thirdly, a small separate detective force, to be applied where necessary. As towns became sufficiently quiet and organized to have their own municipalities and self-government, the distinctly civil element of the police was to be extended to them. The following were the problems General Baker had first to consider, and afterwards to fit his plans to their solutions, viz. the long lines of desert boundary, forming easily get-atable refuge-places for the malefactors of any given district; secondly, the large numbers of Arab tribes living in those same places, and ready at any moment to take advantage of the slightest want of supervision; thirdly, the peculiarity of the cultivation, either precluding the possibility of roads or else causing great obstacles in them. Such were the difficulties of the provinces, while in the towns not only were the people less easy to deal with, as far as regards the natives, but there was also the large number of that bad European population before mentioned, viz. the mixture of

low Maltese, Greeks, and Italians, that form the so-called Levantine element. To keep them in order, a stronger hand than the indigenous Arab policeman was absolutely necessary; besides, in large towns a proportionately strong detective force was most important. Viewing all this, General Baker determined that the semi-military force of the provinces should be largely helped out by an increased number of horses, enabling the gendarmerie to patrol everywhere; while for the towns a certain quantity of Europeans were enlisted, to form a special element calculated to control the above-named Levantine population.

It was not intended to interfere with the gaffirs, or village police, who have always formed the basis of the civil force. These latter are chosen by the Sheikhs of the village, or else volunteer themselves. They get no pay, and are obliged to remain in the place, but they have the, to the Egyptian fellah, much-prized privileges of exemption from conscription and the *corvée*, that is, the gangs of forced labourers who are yearly levied to clean out the canals. In the same way, the powers of the Moodirs, or governors of provinces, were not to be interfered with, as regards the police. A few English officers were to be stationed over the country in such a way that they should keep up a constant inspection. Their duties were to pay particular attention to discipline, and to report on all subjects whatever concerning the police, wherever they might see any shortcomings. The matter then could be taken up

at head-quarters, and, if necessary, reported to the Minister of the Interior, and through him changed or redressed, in case the matter complained of was occasioned through any action of the civil authorities.

As time progressed, the English officers would gradually become more acquainted with Arabic, the laws of the country, and the manners and ideas of the people, and thus be fitted for a direct interference, which in the start-off would only embarrass the affairs of the provinces, and do little good. In fact, General Baker's great object was to bring about these great changes without alienating the people and knocking down existing customs before anything was ready to take their place. He also wished to have two battalions of Turks ready at hand, to meet any exigency where the Egyptian element was not to be depended on. How correct he was in this idea was proved in the first three months—first, in Upper Egypt, when there was trouble with an Arab tribe; and secondly, at Port Said, when the Greeks made a row. In both cases the mere appearance of two hundred Turks settled the whole matter peaceably.

With men like his scattered about in detachments over large extents of country, it was most important to keep up discipline and obedience to orders. In a civil force it is more necessary even than in a military, and therefore General Baker divided the men into companies of fifty, giving to each the somewhat large number of three officers.

Another reason besides the necessity of discipline was that, the non-commissioned officers and men being absolutely ignorant of reading and writing, the officers had to carry on all that kind of work themselves, and therefore one officer was required with every detachment. The forces thus raised were about 6,000 gendarmerie and police, of which 1,600 were mounted; 400 European policemen for Cairo and Alexandria; and 500 Turks. It had been intended to raise 1,000 Turks, but the restriction placed by the English Government, viz. that the Turks should all be inhabitants of Egypt, made this impossible; and the reason was, also, that they exhibited some of the bad characteristics of the Egyptians when they were called to serve out of the country.

After this scheme had been six months in force, crime had diminished by one-half, robberies with violence averaged from two to three monthly, and the Moodirs of provinces either wrote or came to declare personally their satisfaction with the course of things. The frightful epidemic of cholera that soon broke over the country tested the new scheme to its utmost, but it never broke down for a moment. Most foreign countries have made up their minds that this disease can, by close watching and efficient quarantine, be kept within bounds and be prevented from spreading, and therefore the Egyptian Government determined to run cordons of troops round all the infected places. The Egyptian troops were declared by Sir E. Wood to be quite unavailable, as

they were wanted for drill, and must be all kept together at Cairo. Even the taking the guards in Cairo itself was only agreed to partially, and after great difficulty; so the *whole* work was thrown on the gendarmerie, and consequently many of the provinces were more than half denuded of their peace forces. Another heavy business thrown on the hands of the gendarmerie at the same time was that, owing to the expectation of an inordinate rise of the Nile, the careful watching day and night of hundreds of miles of the river, as well as of the banks of the great canals, was rendered absolutely necessary. There is no better known fact in the history of the world than that a deadly epidemic brings with it a relaxation of moral instincts. The fear of the law is nullified—or, anyhow, greatly decreased—by the constant sense of a frightful death that may in all probability overtake you at any moment. Crime, therefore, invariably increases unless kept down with a wonderfully firm hand. That the latter was the case in Egypt is proved by the crime reports of the time, and therefore more than anything shows the wonderfully good success of General Baker's plans. The cost of keeping up the system was something under £240,000, although this was the first year, and stores, magazines, etc., had to be set on foot and organized. The budget had been made out for £320,000, as General Baker had provided for every possible item, so as to leave no hitch in his arrangements; but this did not prevent his exercising the greatest economy under every head of expenditure.

Just at this moment Mr. Clifford Lloyd arrived from England, and, armed apparently with special instructions, he began to employ that zeal and energy which rendered him so conspicuous in Ireland, and to knock down everything. His first idea was to arm the gendarmerie with batons, call them police, and take away all military rank, thus at once showing his ignorance of the East, and specially of the Egyptains; for the Egyptain, even with the best of arms, will hardly face a man with a stick. Then the people have a great idea of titles, and hitherto the officers of the army and gendarmerie were interchangeable; besides, they have little idea of discipline except a military one. The baton idea had to be given up and different things changed, after much argument with General Baker. Still, even the latter could not prevent other very sweeping changes—amongst them, the abrupt transition into the system of Irish constabulary, involving a very few officers, but these good and highly paid.

Now, nothing can be said against the system when applied to Ireland, but nothing can be too much to say against its sudden adoption amongst a people who are totally different in every way. The Irish constable is a well-educated man, on whom every reliance can be placed as to the way in which he will act in the case of emergency. His officers are thoroughly selected gentlemen of good social standing. All, from the principal officer to the last-joined constable, can read, study, and appreciate the excellent code of rules that have been written

for their guidance. The Egyptian gendarme, constable, or policeman, or whatever they are going to call him, is utterly ignorant—no reliance can be placed on him in any emergency; he is fanatical, and will, as a matter of course, look for a bribe before he begins anything. His officers have no social standing as a rule, nor have they anything but the veriest smattering of education. Even when they can read their own language well, the range of books in Arabic is so circumscribed that their ideas are fettered, and explanation becomes most difficult when anything new is being suggested to them.

Thus, to any one who is not obstinately determined to go his "ain gait" regardless of all consequences, it is perfectly clear that the Irish constabulary system is not yet applicable to Egypt. The people have to be brought up to the level of the change, and this cannot be done suddenly by order. General Baker had determined to eventually adopt most of the Irish Constabulary code, but he had too much experience of Orientals, too much knowledge of their habits, and too much inate politeness, to go, as a paper expresses it, like a bull into a china-shop, and break up everything.

The natural sequence of all the changes is, that from two to three highway robberies of importance a month, there were last February seventy-five, and they are still increasing. All the native authorities complain; and last, but not least, Nubar Pasha himself objects most strongly to the new

system. Hundreds of officers have been thrown out of employ, besides clerks, etc.;—this being an object to which General Baker paid particular attention, as he knew how necessary it was for the content of the country not to leave out the men who had always been accustomed to serve the Government, and had no means of doing anything else.

As a finale to the whole, Mr. Clifford Lloyd shows a fanciful saving of £100,000. He put down his scheme at £220,000. I say fanciful, because General Baker, as I heard him explain, would have spent £80,000 less than his budget, thus making the real expense for the year £240,000; while the rest of the Clifford Lloyd saving is by dismissing officers and cutting down the horses, quite ignoring the experience of those who knew the long desert boundaries. What is, besides, most astonishing is, that Mr. Clifford Lloyd, while ignoring the experience of others, did not ever visit any of these places himself.

Before all the above could be quite carried through, the want of a force to go to the Soudan became a matter of immediate necessity. Naturally, the Khedive turned at once to the Egyptian army, under General Sir E. Wood, but this army was again pronounced too raw and unprepared, although it had had over ten months' instruction from the best of officers; therefore, as usual, the Khedive had to turn to General Baker, who, equally as usual, was ready whether for internal duty, as for the cholera, or for external, as the Soudan.

I shall revert to this when I come to the men sent to the Soudan, for, as the British authorities so well knew at this time that the ten-months'-drilled Egyptian soldier was not yet fit to meet the enemy, how can they explain the fact that they allowed totally undrilled men to go to General Baker at Suakim? I myself, as one of the weaker sex, cannot judge as to military matters, but to me it looks as if the intention had been to sacrifice General Baker in the same cool way General Gordon would have been if the English people had not interfered. I cannot think how any one of the British authorities at Cairo could have been ignorant of the whole matter, or any part of it. General Baker himself wrote in the strongest way—at least, so I hear.

But coming back to the force wanted, and the Khedive applying to General Baker, General Baker was extremely disinclined to undertake the affair. He knew the history of Egyptian troops, he had seen them himself in Turkey, and in no one case had they shown themselves trustworthy; but he was promised the co-operation of Zebehr Pasha, who was to raise a large number of blacks. There was some possibility of the Cairo and Alexandria battalions fighting, as they were the non-commissioned officers, and therefore the pick of the old army. Also a lot of Turkish Bashi-Bazouks were to be immediately raised and sent out to him. So in the end he accepted the highly onerous mission.

Before, however, entering upon the exact com-

position of the force, and therefore, as it were, finally leaving the borders of Egypt, something must be said of the political ideas of the time, and of the people who prominently come forward. It is more than doubtful — in fact, it is quite certain — that General Baker would never have moved a step towards Suakim if he had known that the English Government had determined on the total abandonment of the whole of the country beyond the limits of what is known as Egypt proper. He well knew that negotiations with a Mussulman fanatic could have no basis whatever. It was certain that the Mahdi must be ever aggressive, and that, therefore, if we did not go to him he would come down to us. General Baker's idea was to meet the Mahdi at Wadi Halfa, on the Upper Nile. He considered the whole force of Egypt hardly sufficient for this purpose if acting alone, but that it would give the best chance of success, as it drew the Mahdi the greatest distance possible from his base. He therefore expressly declared that he intended to return as soon as the garrisons of Tokar and Sinkat had been rescued, and Suakim placed in a state of defence. Cherif Pasha, the Prime Minister, a pleasant, gentlemanly, and soldier-like man, quite agreed with him, and, as we know now, resigned on the question of giving up Khartoum. The real powers in Egypt were, however, Sir E. Baring—the British minister, Sir E. Wood, and Mr. C. Lloyd. The two first are well known in England, and the latter in Ireland. Omar Pasha Lutfi, the Minister of War, a man who spoke no

European language, had very little to do in the matter, or in anything connected with the Soudan, while Khairi Pasha, Minister of the Interior, did all he could to help.

Zebehr Pasha, the conqueror of Kordofan, deserves a paragraph all to himself. He has had a most chequered and eventful career. Originally a large trading merchant from Central Africa, and therefore including slaves amongst his wares, he found himself much hampered by the Sultan of Darfour. To get over this, he first tried to get the Egyptian Government to help him; but, as they either refused or put him off with promises, he took the matter up by himself and boldly sent a message to the Sultan, declaring that he, Zebehr, would make war on the Sultan unless he at once gave in. The answer was an order to come and give himself up a prisoner, together with the significant notice that as soon as he had done this he should have his body lessened by a head. Zebehr, in no way daunted, immediately levied his men, made war as he had declared, and eventually took Darfour, at the same time killing the Sultan. He then gave the country over to the Egyptian Government, naturally asking to be made governor of it. They, however, would not promise anything, and made some one else governor. Zebehr Pasha, much disgusted, came up to Cairo; and Ismail Pasha, the late Khedive, making up his mind that Zebehr Pasha was too powerful, determined on keeping the latter prisoner at Cairo, where he has accordingly been for some years.

During this time Zebehr Pasha's son remained in the Soudan, and General Gordon was appointed governor-general. The latter's great idea was to put an end to the slave trade, and to prevent the Bashi-Bazouks or Turkish *employés* from bullying the people. In carrying out this, he managed to add to the harm done by the retention of Zebehr Pasha at Cairo by killing his son. There can be no question that Gordon was acting rightly in this case, as far as he himself was concerned, for Zebehr Pasha's son was carrying out the slave trade as far as he could, and died while resisting the orders of Government; but Gordon's great fault was in turning the Bashi-Bazouks out of the country, for he then entirely broke the power of the Egyptians, and thus enabled the Arab slave-dealers to get the upper hand. No more fatal mistake could be committed. No doubt the Bashi-Bazouks were great tyrants, but before they were turned out care should have been taken to have some element that could replace them in keeping the country generally quiet, and in giving the Government power to cope with the Arab slave-dealers. This he did not do, and he further raised to power many of the natives of the country for no other reason than that they were natives of the country. The consequence is, that these latter have gone bodily over to the Mahdi. It is also on this slave-dealing account that the Egyptians have greatly to complain against the English people, for the latter have fixed on them a most exacting treaty, one which entails great expense and trouble in the carrying out, and

which, in consequence, has raised the whole of Soudan against them. There has been, in modern times, no greater example of the Pharisaical manner of laying heavy burdens on other men's shoulders and refusing to stir a finger to help them, than this treatment of the Egyptians by that vast body of English methodists and fanatics whose representatives make Exeter Hall their principal meeting-place.

CHAPTER VI.

VOYAGE TO SUAKIM.

COMPOSITION OF FORCE GOING TO SUAKIM—THE 1ST BRIGADE—THE 2ND BRIGADE—ZEBEHR PASHA, COMMANDING THE 2ND BRIGADE, NOT PERMITTED TO COME—COLONEL HARINGTON STARTS WITH 1ST DETACHMENT—OCCUPATION OF SOLDIERS ON BOARD—OFFICERS USELESS—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FELLAH SOLDIERS—THEIR SUPERSTITIONS AND POWERS OF ENDURANCE—THEIR PRAYERS—TEACHING THEM SIGNALLING—THE BASHI-BAZOUKS—THEIR MUSIC AND DANCING—THEIR DRESS—OUR PILOT—ARRIVAL AT SUAKIM—CAPTAIN DARWELL'S BAD NEWS—MR. WYLDE, OUR HOST, AND HIS HOUSE—HIS SERVANTS—PRINCIPAL EUROPEAN INHABITANTS—COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE BASHI-BAZOUKS—VISIT TO SULEIMAN PASHA.—THE FALSE RUMOURS HE BRINGS—UNTRUSTWORTHINESS OF OUR SPIES—THE ENGLISH OFFICERS.

HAVING brought up my notes to the time when the expedition started, and thus explained in some degree the course of events that culminated therein, I now, in the leisure of ship-life, proceed to make out the numbers and composition of the force, as far as we know of at present. The commander-in-chief was Lieut.-General Valentine Baker Pasha. His head-quarter staff consisted of Colonel Abdul Russak Bey, native chief of the staff; Lieut.-Colonel Fitzroy Hay, late of the Highlanders, European

chief of staff; Major Harvey, A.D.C., late 42nd Black Watch; Colonel Morice Bey, paymaster; Dr. Leslie, in charge of medical department. Commanding 1st Division was Major-General Sartorius Pasha, and on his staff were Lieut.-Colonel Harington, chief of divisional staff; Major Izzet Effendi; Captain Goodall, A.D.C. The 2nd Brigade, with Zebehr Pasha in command, is to be made up hereafter. But, as a matter of fact, Zebehr Pasha never came down. The officials at Cairo used his influence to get the black troops together, and without that influence they could never have been collected. Then they deliberately threw him over in exactly the same way as Baker Pasha had been deprived, when he first came over from Constantinople, of the army which he had been specially summoned to command. This was another grand blunder that rendered the Suakim expedition almost hopeless from the first. The black troops required to be led in their own fashion; they had no idea of drill or discipline. There was no time to lick them into shape. With Zebehr Pasha at their head, they would have been formidable antagonists to the Soudanese, and have fought in precisely the same fashion. Without him they were wasted. But to return to the actual expedition. The troops that started with Colonel Harington were the Cairo battalion and about 100 Turks, the rest of the latter refusing to go. The Cairo battalion should have been 800 strong, but, as mentioned before, on the way 280 deserted, leaving only 520 men. With us there are

600 from Alexandria, the remaining 200 coming later on. We expect to find 600 Soudanese from Massowah at Suakim, besides 400 or 500 of the remnant of the original garrison.

On the morning of the 5th of December, in weather that could not be more perfect or lovely, we passed through the entrance of the Gulf of Suez. If it were not for the dreadful noise the mules made between decks, and the ceaseless chatter of the Egyptian soldiers, the steamer would have been agreeable enough as long as one kept on deck, and there was plenty of wind blowing about. But down below, besides the mules and men, the intense dirt and stink of an Egyptian vessel became almost unbearable. There was, of course, no such thing as a bath. I tried to make shift with a small travelling-one that I had used in a former voyage, more than ten years ago, for my eldest child; but, unluckily, there was a small hole in the bottom, and complaints very soon came up from the Egyptian soldiers down below, who very naturally, for them, objected to have anything to do with water. Our great amusement was to watch the officers and men belonging to the regiment on board. They were squatted all round in every position possible, in every hole and corner, and all their conversation was carried on in the exaggerated tone and manner so peculiar to Orientals, and which always makes the colder-blooded European stranger imagine that a desperate quarrel is going on. Near a group so employed a man was at his prayers. He was one of the

noisy throng a moment ago, when suddenly, for no apparent reason, he calmly turned on one side, spread his regimental cloak before him, took off his shoes, and, standing in the orthodox position, began repeating his *fatah* (a Mahomedan prayer). This takes from five to ten minutes, and, besides words, entails kneeling, bowing, rubbing his head on the floor, and different movements of the hands, which have all to be carefully followed out. Next to him is a man making coffee with a spirit machine, and thereby risking the lives of all on board, for he actually set light to his clothes by spilling the spirit. Nobody, however, took any notice. Again, immediately behind the man at his prayers, are two sergeants arguing the point with some men who were trying to get off performance of a duty. While the argument is at its height, the man's prayers being ended, he puts on his shoes, and without a moment's hesitation joins in the dispute. Amidst all this row and confusion, the officers calmly sat down, smoked their cigarettes, or ate their food with their fingers without troubling themselves in any degree. It was only when my husband directly interfered that their extraordinary apathy could be roused at all, and they never seemed to think it out of the way that their men should argue upon every order that the officers gave them.

Watching these people gives one a good idea of what an intensely communistic country Egypt is; the men evidently all consider themselves as good as their officers. They see no reason why they them-

selves should not, *Inshallah* (by God's will), be some day officers, pashas, khedives, anything. The great characteristics of the Egyptian fellah, besides cowardice, are an inordinate vanity, desperate boasting, and a teeming fancy, which renders the wonderful tales of the "Arabian Nights" matters so perfectly possible to them as to make explanation quite unnecessary. They live in an ideal world of their own, peopled with jins, fairies, houris, and every kind of imaginative being that has ever been conjured up by tradition or story. In our Shoobra house, the gardener would not sleep alone downstairs, because he said an *afrit* (devil) walked about the hall at night. Very few of the natives, if any, would go along the road on the other side of the Nile, from the bridge towards Hassan Pasha's palace, after dark, for the same reason. They said the *afrit* in this case always appeared at the corner of the Government garden, which is on the left of the road, and about five or six hundred yards from the bridge. From the earliest ages Egypt has been the country of mysticism. Its grandiose temples, in whose dark recesses secret rites were carried on for centuries by its eagle-headed priesthood; its hieroglyphical sacred language, secret from all else, gave the people then those powers of imagination which even now retain them in dreamland, and makes them so averse to hard facts. In the Orient, the son retains the traces of the father, the father of his father before him, and so on to an extent that would be quite impossible in Europe. We know, from the remotest period of Egypt's history,

that they have been a race of agriculturists, subordinate as a nation to others, or else having paid auxiliaries to fight for them. As it was then, so it must be now. A nation of cowardly antecedents can never have brave sons. Still, the physique of the Egyptian soldier is excellent. Some time ago, my husband tells me, a lot of clothing was ordered for the gendarmerie, according to the usual sizes required for the English army. When it came, it was found that the two first sizes could only be used, and an extra set of large clothing had to be further ordered.

With all this wonderful cowardice, they still have a power of bearing pain which is marvellous. They will undergo the most painful operations and recover from them, when, in the case of a European, the chances would have been ten to one against him. When, for instance, during the Abyssinian war, a large number of them were lying about the field, they feigned death, and allowed themselves to be hacked about by their conquerors without moving a muscle, in hopes that they might preserve their wretched lives. I must say, it is not pleasant thinking of these things just as we are going to Suakim; but I trust we shall have a large number of fighting blacks to make up for them.

We have on board with us four English non-commissioned officers, who, as I said before, have been promoted to be lieutenants in the Egyptian service. Two of them are good signallers, and my husband was employed all day teaching, with their

help, the native officers a simple method of signalling. The Arabic alphabet contains thirty-three letters, of which thirty only are really used. They are divided into five sets of six each, so that by waving a flag according to the number of the letter in the set, and then to the number of the set itself, the particular letter was indicated. This method, they say, takes twice as long as what my husband calls the Morse system; but then, the latter takes months to learn, and also is not easily applicable to the thirty letters of Arabic. Dinner-time came before the whole of the officers had been instructed, and we had to go down to the nasty little saloon, and to eat what we could of the oily Greek cooking.

In the evening the Albanian Bashi-Bazouks gave us a specimen of their music. One of them had a regular Pandora pipe, exactly like what one sees on the old Greek pottery. He was a shepherd from the mountains of Abrazza, and appeared to enjoy his own music very much. To us it sounded like the droning of a rather squeaking bagpipe, with every now and then a shadow of a tune in the shape of two or three notes. The musician was clad in his regular costume—dirty sheepskin coat, an equally dirty collarless shirt, slightly embroidered waistcoat, a lot of short petticoats *à la* Greek, and leggings and shoes; the inevitable tarboosh being a matter of course. He was one of several Turkish recruits that had not yet been put into uniform. It is curious to note the contrast between these men, who are of undoubted courage and pluck, and the Egyptian soldiers—the

first, happy, laughing, and in good humour; the others, sulky, quarrelsome, and fanatical. With the first one seems to have immediate sympathies, while as to the latter, the more you look at them the less you like them. We turned in about eleven o'clock, it not being possible to do so before, on account of the row the men made talking. Each day passed like this, and on the morning of the 8th of December we found ourselves threading the dangerous coral reefs which lie for forty miles all along our course to Suakim. The great danger of these is that many of them are a few feet only below the surface of the water. In a moderately calm sea they are not visible, on account of being sufficiently low for the sea not even to break on them. Our pilot, whom we had taken at Suez, had by no means a reassuring appearance. He was a nice, pleasant-looking old man, who never moved in a hurry, and who, if one asked him about arriving safely at Suakim, invariably answered, *Inshallah* (if God wills). Skirting along the shore, about thirty miles from Suakim, we saw immense herds of light-coloured camels grazing. There was much speculation as to the owners of these same, and my husband determined to have a try for them if they belonged to the enemy. To-day the European officers, while talking to my husband, told him the men were highly delighted and much comforted at seeing his wife and daughter on board, as they inferred thereby that there could not be much danger in the place we were going to.

At last, at about twelve noon, we began to get into

Lt.-Col. COLBORNE. Captain MASSY. Major MARTIN. COETLOGAN PASHA. Mr. EVAN.

Lt.-Col. FARQUHAR. H. E. Lt.-Genl. BAKER PASHA. H. E. HICKS PASHA. Captain WALKER.

the opening of the port of Suakim. The town lies so low that until the vessel turns in, nothing is seen of it. It has by no means a striking appearance, and the only good thing about the harbour is its safety, when once you are in. The mouth of it is very narrow, and is closed in by the land on one side and a deep, heavy bank of coral on the other. To get into its anchoring-ground, close to the Custom-house, the captain ran the forepart of the ship slightly aground, and then, allowing her to swing, backed into his position. I may say here that his is an Egyptian nautical manœuvre, not by any means patronized by the English ships, who, in spite of the narrowness of the channel, always manage to get in and out properly. Almost as soon as we had anchored, the quarantine officer came on board and gave us *pratique*. Captain Darwell, of H.M.S. *Ranger*, then came up and reported the bad news that Mahomed Tahir Pasha, hoping to retrieve his name before the arrival of General Baker, had managed to lose the Blacks, a body of trained troops who had arrived only a week before from Massowah. He also said that Colonel Harington was busily throwing up lines to prevent the town being taken by a rush. My husband then went on shore to see the governor-general, Suleiman Pasha, and to give notice to him of the authority under which he came.

While there he met Mr. Jack Wylde, of the firm of Wylde, Beyts & Co., who most kindly offered to put us up, as he explained there was no kind of hotel whatever in the place. Our things being

already packed, we went ashore in Mr. Brewster's boat. Mr. Wylde's house lies just on the other side of the Custom-house. Like all the rest in the town, it is built of white coral, quarried from the reefs outside. The illustration gives a very good idea of it. It is entered by a large door, which gives admittance into a passage, going through the centre of a small hall, which has a raised dais at each side.

It is here that Mr. Wylde has his office. Passing one or two small windowless dark rooms, the passage goes on to a rather narrow staircase, which leads up to the first storey. The stairs turn twice, and when mounting the last two steps the smell of cooking points out the kitchen close by. The four principal rooms of the house are on the first floor. The first, the dining-room, about twenty feet by sixteen; next to it, on the right, another sixteen by sixteen, used as a lumber and passage room; the bedroom in front of the latter is that which I occupied; and the drawing-room, same size as the dining-room, is in front. Upstairs there is another bedroom, which my daughter occupied, and this completes the accommodation of the house. There is a verandah round the drawing-room and dining-room. A flight of wooden stairs leads down into the yard. The verandah was a most pleasant lounge. We could always find shelter from the sun or wind in some part of it. The yard, with high walls on either side, was almost flush to the sea, and we usually landed there when returning to the house. Mr. Wylde had also the other half of the block, of which his house formed the left portion.

It was divided much in the same way as far as rooms were concerned, but had no upper storey.

The servants are really part of the house, so they ought to have their notice here. They were—a Genoese cook, a servant who had belonged to poor Captain Moncrieff; and one Furrajulla, a *ci-devant* slave from Bonga, Central Africa. I believe it is some cannibal tribe, for Mr. Wylde used always to teaze him about eating young babies, and so make him quite frantic. He was very short, but very powerful, thick-lipped, black, with splendid white teeth, except his bottom front ones, which had been knocked out in accordance with the customs of his tribe. Now and then he got very much out of temper and bullied the Portuguese cook frightfully. Once in Jedda some Turkish soldiers insulted him, and he without hesitation went in for the whole guard (four men) and licked them all. Then, when the officer came to complain in the morning to Mr. Wylde, Furrajulla, who had not recovered his temper, pushed past, knocked over the officer, gave him a smart rap or two, and then bolted off for twenty-four hours into the desert for fear of his master—the latter being the only one whom he has any respect for, or will take a beating from. My husband, having sent for horses, went to make an inspection of the troops, and we proceeded to make ourselves comfortable in our new home.

There are not many European inhabitants. The only English official is Mr. Brewster, the head of the Custom-house; and the two brothers Wylde and

Mr. Bewley, form the only commercial house. They have also a business house at Jedda. Of foreign residents there are Mons. Le May, the French consul; and Mons. Carolambo, the Greek consul. Besides ourselves there are no ladies here at all. In the afternoon my husband came back, and told us that all the troops are to be immediately employed in strengthening the lines, and that he was afraid there would be some trouble with the Bashi-Bazouks who had come before. The little Greek consul, who was present, started up and went off into a long series of complaints, saying that these men got drunk, stole, entered the harems, etc., and that nobody was able to exercise any control over them. It looks as if these complaints were true, for when we went through the bazaar that afternoon we saw a lot of men there, looking already more than half drunk. We could not go far, as we were already tired, and there was no way of getting about except on foot.

Suleiman Pasha, the governor-general, returned my husband's call in the evening. We received him in the drawing-room. He is a small, square man about five feet four inches, and looking about fifty-five years old. He could talk no French, but through an interpreter expressed his immense pleasure at seeing us all here. He asked my husband to meet him in council at ten a.m. the next morning, to consult on the state of affairs, which he could not help acknowledging were in a bad way. Coffee and cigarettes were during this time handed round, and

then, with many protestations of eternal friendship, the governor-general took his leave. By-the-by, Suleiman Pasha tells us that Osman Digma was killed, or else severely wounded, in the late battle; but none of us believed this shave, for it is evident that the Government spies invariably report what the Government wishes. In the evening we saw Colonel Harington, Majors Holroyd and Giles, Captain Walker, and Mr. Oliphant, correspondent of the *St. James's Gazette*. My husband had a long talk with Mr. Brewster, who put him up to all that had happened. The place was so new, and the situation so strange, that though very tired we could not go to bed, and Mr. Wylde, returning from dining on board the *Ranger*, further kept us up with his ideas of the situation and his hospitable wishes for our comfort, though he declared that now the English residents would be put to much ado in order to find a sufficient quantity of collars and neckties—articles which, owing to the non-presence of ladies, had not been in much request hitherto.

CHAPTER VII.

SUAKIM.

DIFFICULTY OF GETTING INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICIALS—NO CATTLE, NO FORAGE—MR. BREWSTER DESPATCHES HIS SPIES TO TOKAR AND SINKAT—SUAKIM AND ENVIRONS AS SEEN FROM ROOF OF OUR HOUSE—CORAL HOUSES—PRETTY WINDOWS—THE BAZAAR—HOUSES BUILT CORNERWISE—OUR WASHERWOMAN—FEMALE WATER-CARRIERS; THEIR ORNAMENTS; THEIR UGLINESS—THE CAUSEWAY AND ITS DEFENCES—SHENOWI BEY'S HOUSE—MAINLAND BAZAAR—SHOCKHAIRED ARABS—MODE OF DRESSING HAIR—INTERVIEWING SPIES—SINKAT—ATTEMPTS TO RELIEVE IT; AND THE GARRISON THERE.

EGYPTIAN events are getting so interesting now that I am regularly writing my letters to form a succinct account of all that passes. I am afraid some of the people who come here rather find me a bore, as, of course, I have to ask a good many explanations, for I am not quite up in military matters as yet. However, I shall learn sharply, for my husband has no secretary, and I have to write most of his letters. To-day there was a particularly important one, owing to the information he got during his interview with Suleiman Pasha. He had tried to get a report of the ammunition and stores in the town,

and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could obtain anything like one, and even this in the end turned out incorrect, as it neither mentioned clothing nor small arms (rifles). He writes to General Baker, after enclosing the list—"I have to remark on the above that I obtained this account after great difficulty, and I have great doubts of its correctness. In order that I may have time to send in my report, I have ordered the *Zagazig* to be delayed two hours, in order that my officers should verify the above. Captain Darwell has kindly lent us the gunner of the *Ranger*, in order to sort the machine-gun and small-arm ammunition, which has been mixed together in so astonishing a manner, as to be hardly available. Forage is very scarce, and when I asked the governor-general to send a ship to Massowah for some, he answered, 'There was none there.' Also that it would take ten days to collect cattle. Still, it being absolutely necessary, I insisted upon the Egyptian gunboat *Gafferiah* starting immediately. . . ."

There was great hurry in getting off the letters, as, owing to the reefs outside, it is very unsafe for steamers to leave after twelve noon, for it takes several hours before the open sea is reached. Needless to say, that though this has been an Egyptian port for some years, no survey has ever been attempted, nor a single beacon placed on these most dangerous reefs. My husband saw Captain Darwell to-day, the 9th of December, and agreed with him about some signals in case of necessity; and, con-

sidering the strong liability of a dangerous attack on the part of the enemy, Captain Darwell proposed to fire a few shells from the big guns of the ships, whenever my husband might think it necessary to scare the enemy. Mr. Brewster has also been commissioned to procure some reliable spies, in order to carry letters immediately to Sinkat and Tokar. They are to come this evening, and in the meanwhile we are all going to have a good look at Suakim itself to-day, and the lines to-morrow.

To commence with, we mount on to the roof of our house, from which we get a first-rate idea of the locality, owing to its being somewhat higher than any of the other houses, and so we see that the important part of the town is built on a small island of a somewhat oval shape, the longer diameter being about a thousand yards, and the shorter six hundred. The channel is north-east, and the ever-growing coral rocks threaten to close it at no distant time. H.M.S. *Coquette*, commanded by Captain Crowe, R.N., lies in the channel. H.M.S. *Ranger* is moored within twenty yards of our house, and H.M.S. *Woodlark* close by; while a little to the south-east of the Government-house is the regular mooring-place for all Egyptian vessels. The channel round the island to the south has a considerable depth of water, and the only communication to the mainland is a causeway about eighty yards long and twelve broad. On the mainland there are a considerable number of houses; beyond them, again, are the lines and forts, which are about a thousand yards from here as the

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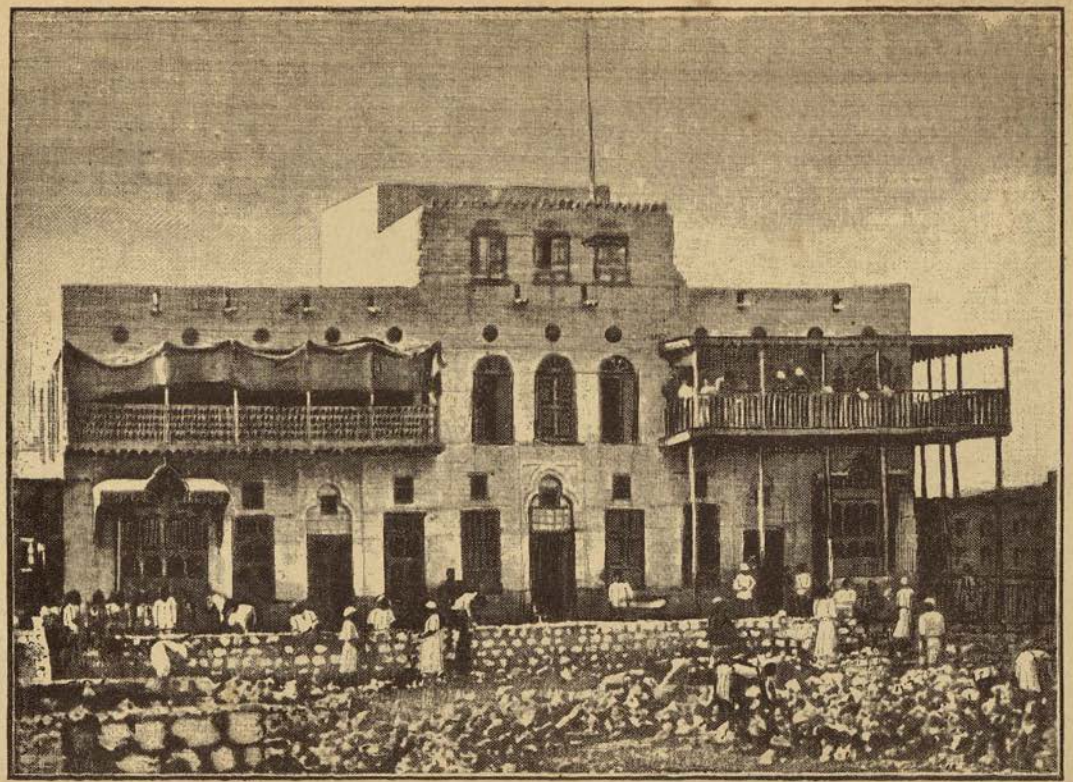


Mr. WYLDE'S HOUSE AT SUAKIM.

crow flies. The country on all sides stretches out in a vast plain, gradually rising to the mountains, and which, they tell us, is somewhat broken up by shallow ravines as the hills are approached. A dense growth of bush appears to rise more and more thickly as the distance increases. The whole horizon to the west is bounded by a series of hills, which culminate, a little to the north-west, in the mountains of Sinkat. Almost due west, and just peeping above the line of the most distant bush, are two small hills. These were pointed out to us as the place where the Blacks were massacred a week ago. A little further north than the Sinkat direction, and still in the plain, are the wells of Handoub, the first station on the way to Berber. Here General Gordon was said to have made up a kind of small station; but probably this has all now disappeared. The report is that, should the enemy attack, they will make a rush into the south-west part of the mainland town; and, my husband says, inner lines must be immediately made, as the outer ones are too extended for our small force.

Having thus seen all we could from the roof, we came down and took our walks abroad, in and out of the streets of the town. There is not much to see, the Government-house, the Custom-house, Mr. Wylde's, and one or two others, being the most important, and are all situated on the seaside. We thought at first they were whitewashed, the white of the coral being so bright. By-the-by, one's romance as to coral is rather diminished in seeing

these solid blocks of stone, while one's idea has always been of some slight, fragile, beautiful stuff, not this hard, prosaic, useful substance. The houses are all built more or less in the same style: if for Europeans, then the rooms inside are decently large; but if for Mussulmans, then the necessity under which they think they are of shutting up their women, and of giving each her separate apartment, causes the interior to be divided into numberless little rooms. Most of them have those very pretty latticed balconies which come out so well in the illustration of the Greek Consulate. These are made up of little pieces of wood, most tastefully joined together, and have a wonderful effect, although, on looking close, one is disappointed to see that the carpenter has not troubled himself about regularity.

There is not a single pane of glass in the town, badly closing venetians being the only means of shutting up the windows. The bazaar is in the centre of the island, and consists of about a dozen shops kept up by Greeks, and about twenty other small ones by Arabs, from Jedda, and Egyptians. The Greek shops go in for liquor of all kinds, especially what they call *mastic*. In this case, it means the worst and most fiery spirit possible, with a gum called mastic dissolved in it. They have also tinned provisions of all kinds, and a certain amount of the commonest and most gaudy-coloured Manchester goods. The smaller shops sell the cheaper kinds of cotton-cloth and things more peculiarly necessary to the natives. The vendors of meat,

fowls, eggs, vegetables, etc., when there are any, are amongst these.

Near the bazaar is the post-office, a complete sinecure, as, except on the two days a week when the post comes and goes for Massowah, Jedda, or Suez, there is nothing to do. The town on the island is very badly built; the houses have evidently been allowed to spring up according to the fancy of each individual builder. Thus, while the island is much crowded, there really would have been space for as many houses again as there are now, had the streets been laid out, and the houses built properly facing the road. But here, again, the Mussulman customs militate against the exigencies of the day. For the women are not allowed to lean out of their windows, and thus be able to see up and down the road, so the builder always places the house corner-wise, in order to enable those inside the room to see both ways without exposing themselves. The nearest road out of the island is by coming back through two or three crooked streets to the corner of our house, from which a road leads straight to the causeway. On the left there are some heaps of coral, evidently intended to build houses; at present there are only some native huts, from which every now and then a naked little woolly-haired urchin rushes out, stares at you, and takes a dive in again. The other inhabitants appear to be frightfully ugly old women, and a few cocks and hens.

I must not forget our washerwoman, the only one in the town, who lives on the opposite side of

the road, and who, taking advantage of the circumstances, has run up her price to seven francs a dozen for everything all round, large and small. At the end of the road lives the French consul; and, turning to the left, we come across a lot of Soudanese women selling water, which they have brought from the wells beyond the town. They carry this water in goat-skins, and the price of the water each contains is two piastres (5*d.*). These women, like all old Soudanese, are anything but handsome, yet they cover themselves over with necklaces of different-coloured beads, silver bangles, and large gold nose-rings, some of which ornaments are very handsome. Passing them, on our right is the gate closing the exit from the town on to the causeway. A gatling, raised on a platform, commands the latter along its whole length of about eighty yards, and also the open space beyond. Walking along the causeway, we could see that the guns of the *Ranger* would sweep off any enemy attempting to cross. This was rather a comfort, as the Egyptian soldiers at the gate were the most feeble, old, and emaciated invalids possible. They turn out to be what the governor-general calls "the old soldiers of the garrison." Hardly any two of them have the same uniform; the officer himself was clad in an old ragged pair of trousers, a plain overcoat, and tarboosh. Rheumatism so doubled him in two that he was scarcely able to salute. In fact, nothing could be more certain than that the whole would bolt the moment the most distant cry of "enemy" would reach them.

The first building on the mainland is a large store belonging to Shenowi Bey. Mr. Brewster, the head of the customs, tells me that there are at this moment over £250,000 of Manchester goods stored there. Shenowi Bey appearing to be an important personage, I asked who he was, and was told that he is the richest man in Suakim. He owns almost all the vessels that are used in the export and import trade between this place, Jedda, and Massowah, and all the other coast towns; and that as to his riches, the fact of his being the favourite Government contractor fully accounted for it. They all say that he is hand and glove with Government, and that there is every probability of his having a very good understanding with the other side. Continuing our way, we soon got into the mainland town bazaar. Very few of the houses here have any upper storey; the Greek shops are more than ever devoted to liquor-selling; while the rest of the tradespeople ensconce themselves in the little holes the people in the East call shops. They sell bread, biscuit, coloured handkerchiefs with dreadful pictures of animals and trees on them, sweetmeats made of sugar, flour and rancid butter, pressed dates, the whole more or less covered with flies, millet, ghee, and oil. In times of plenty most of the shops would be open; now more than three-quarters are shut.

What struck us most were the woolly-headed Soudanese and the shock-haired Arabs. I do not know what other name to give them, for they have such a wonderful way of doing up their hair and so

making the most of it. It is never very long, being rarely more than nine inches. When they want to get it up into the tip-top Arab fashion, they cover it over with a plentiful coating of mutton fat, which, on exposure to the sun, melts down in a few days; then the individual in question, using a long thin sort of skewer, begins to disentangle his hair, taking as a rule hours, if not days, in the operation. You can see what it looks like in the illustration, where we are sitting on our camels, and one of these men is holding mine. The principal mass is straight above the head. This is *de rigueur*, but the side hair may be either combed out or else done up in a multitude of stiff little ringlets. Their ordinary dress is a single coarse cotton cloth thrown round them, and nearly every one carries a short spear, terminating in rather a long flat blade. Our camel-man is a thorough type of the Arab of the country, and belongs to the Shaier tribe, who acknowledge Mahomed Aly as their chief. When a native wants to propose to the girl of his heart, he goes to her, offers her his skewer, and squats down on the ground. Should she take the hint and comb his hair, she becomes his betrothed.

My husband, on his return from his military duties, met us in the bazaar, and we came back at once in order that he might interview and instruct the spies that were to go off in the evening. On arriving at the house, we saw a couple of these above-described Arabs, and also the vakeel or agent of Mahomed Aly. My husband interviewed the latter

first, and arranged with him to send into Sinkat 200 sheep and seven camels, promising to pay six times the present enhanced value for all safely delivered.

It is extraordinary how difficult it is working with Egyptian officials. Yesterday no reliable return could be obtained of the stores, etc.; to-day an absolutely false one has been made of the strength of the Sinkat garrison, for Mahomed Tahir Pasha reported that Tewfik Bey could march out of Sinkat with 600 men, and yet leave a sufficient garrison behind. The real numbers now appear to be —Bashi-Bazouks, 150; Egyptian soldiers, 332, including 32 artillery. Nearly all these men have women and children with them. A short time ago the latter could have been moved down to Suakim without hindrance, and the men thus left behind would have had a sufficiency of provisions, and would not have been hampered with a useless crowd in any attempt they might make to escape. As said before, Mahomed Aly had offered to put in a quantity of provisions on the 7th of November, but it was not till the 22nd that Suleiman Pasha signed the order, enabling the stores to be given over to him for transport. The roads by that time were all blocked, and the risk was too great for any ordinary transaction. This is what the vakeel told my husband, and it was corroborated by those present. He now, however, declared his intention of persuading his chief to risk a sudden effort, on condition that my husband guaranteed him against all loss, and paid according to agreement in case of success. This proposal

having been agreed to, the vakeel, a fat, jolly-looking Arab, took his departure. As he was going, a smell of stinking fat pervaded the room, getting stronger and stronger, till at last our two spies appeared. The cause was soon apparent, in the fact that one of them had just undergone the first stage of hairdressing. However, both were intelligent enough, and, having been given letters to notify the intended arrival of General Baker with a large force, they were despatched that night. Soon after dinner my husband returned to the lines, for the troops are extremely liable to panics, and it requires the commanding officer to be on the spot so as to stop them in time.

One of our spies came in from Tamanib a few days ago, and describes Osman Digma as a short, spare man, getting on for fifty, and who can only be recognized from the others by wearing the dirtiest clothes of the lot. He begins the morning by reading some of the Koran to a circle of his followers, who sit round about him; he then expounds and afterwards reads letters he pretends to have received from the Mahdi. Then he tells of some dreams he considers as divine inspiration, and again repeats his promises that all his followers shall become invulnerable, so long as they pay proper attention to the Mahdi; that those who are killed in action have committed some sin, and even they are forgiven and go straight to Paradise. In every way he shows himself to be a leader most dangerous to the Government, as the goal he aims at is undoubtedly power. He does not seem to mind

GENERAL VIEW OF SUAKIM WITH SHENOWI BEY'S HOUSE.

spending all the money he gets, but appears determined, like many an eastern before him, to carve out a kingdom from the ruins of a decaying power.

He gathered all the experience which makes him so redoubtable an enemy during his occupation as a slave-dealer, when he brought several large caravans safely to Suakim from great distances, thus showing a man of high capacity; for the journey, as a rule, takes two years—one going, and the other coming—and therefore necessitates everything to be arranged long beforehand, and precautions without number taken to ensure the safety of the return caravan as it slowly progresses on its long journey. An old slave-dealer described to me in excited tones, as if he enjoyed the remembrance, how they caught the slaves originally in countries beyond the great lakes, bought ivory, loaded the slaves and camels; then, arming themselves well, marched up by the equatorial provinces on to Gondokoro, then along the Nile to Khartoum, and afterwards separated, part to go to Egypt, and part to the Red Sea. How they had sometimes to fight and sometimes to buy off the numerous petty tribes through whose territory they had to pass. He then spoke of the numberless dangers undergone from man, wild beast, and, above all, want of water; and how they always treated their slaves well, and how these latter invariably ended by liking their masters better than their old home, etc. I am afraid that I showed considerable signs of unbelief when he said the last part, but I could see that it requires a very exceptional man to carry out an enterprise

of the kind successfully. And Osman Digma is *just* that kind of person: he is a thin, middle-sized man, somewhat past the prime, but full of energy and quite up to the events of the day. He knows his countrymen well, and, in spite of reverses, thoroughly understands how to excite their spirit of fanaticism and keep up their courage. His mode of life is the simplest. The taxes he collects are all devoted to the use of the people about him, whom he feeds gratis as long as he has anything. He then interviews all who wish it, and discusses projects to drive the infidels and Turks out of the country. He prides himself on wearing the dirtiest clothes and in eating the simplest food, as he declares he cares for nothing on earth except the will of God transmitted to him through the Mahdi. The second of the letters I now transcribe was dedicated by him to the commander of the rebels at Tokar, Sheikh Kidr, who sent it on to the commandant at Tokar, Mahmoud Effendi. The latter forwarded it to Suakim, with the following despatch of his own, written in answer to one of Mahmoud Tahir Pasha's:—

"To the General Commanding Eastern Soudan.

"Myself, officers, and men are all in good health, and I kiss your hands.

"The private letter you wrote, dated the 1st of December, reached me at nine o'clock in the evening of the same day, and the contents I thoroughly understand and all; and, although I have begged for assistance from the first till now, you have not responded.

"The assistance of troops that I have begged you have not afforded me. Even though you have not afforded me the assistance I have asked, you might have answered my letters.

"I have received letters from you, indeed, but containing nothing but empty compliments. The letter you mention having sent on the 22nd of November has never reached me; only the one dated the 1st of December. Now all our hopes and fate are in the hands of God, as I see there is no help from any one. We have done our work like brave soldiers, but there is no one to support us. If I had any help, we should not only be able to get out of this, but to take out with our forefingers the eyes of the enemy, *i.e.* beat them easily, as I know very well they cannot stand against us. But whatever God wishes must be done. As I described to you before, we were attacked on the 15th of November and on the 29th of November, early in the morning; they have attacked us, and the enemy, having lost a considerable number, retreated in disorder. On Friday, the last day of November, after midday, they attacked again with artillery and rifles, and fought for half an hour without retiring. After losing several men they retired, and up to the present date continue night and day attacking us. They lose several men, and our soldiers and all are in the hands of God. Four days ago from this date (8th of December) an Arab boy came to us, and told us he belonged to Ebrahim Effendi Abdulla, governor of that district; with him a girl named

Saida. They said they had come from Kassala, on duty with Abdul Fellah Effendi, Lieutenant, accompanied by thirty soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks and a 'Cherif.' When they reached Edowan, the Kameilab tribe and their Sheikh attacked them; and when Hassan, another Sheikh, saw this, he attacked the party with great fury and massacred them and took all their possessions, and this news was given to the boy by the governor's wife. And besides the news from the boy, we knew something was going on by seeing the tribes moving that way. After the boy reached us, we noticed that all the tribes were moving in the direction of Teb and assembling there, but I can't tell you the numbers. By the help of God, whatever their numbers may be, what we see of them, they could not stand half an hour against troops. Now, I beg of you to send whatever force you intend to at once (*i.e.* the minute before). It is no use describing more, as I have done so already so often. As you know the state of affairs yourself, it is no use describing them further, and no use your writing complimentary letters to us, if at the end we are to fall into the hands of the enemy.

"Vakkil Eshkar and Mamoor Eshkar,

"IBRAHIM MAKARVEE.

"Dated the 8th of December, 1883."

The letter Osman Digma dictated was very well translated, my husband says, for it preserves all the peculiar idiom of Arabic without destroying the sense. It is as follows:—

"In the name of the merciful God, praise to the God, salutation to his Prophet and family, from the slave of God, Kidr-bin-Ali, Meyahdin (general of the Mahdi's force).

"To the officers of Tokar, and to the writers in the mosque, and to the informers, that the order is in the hand of God, promoting whom He pleases and destroying whom He wishes. Be it known that the high God and His Prophet (salutation be on him), the adviser and advising whom he selects (your good book also as yet advises you into good ways). He who understands the knowledge of surety that the property of the world is very little and does not weigh down a fly's wing and passeth away, and at the end of it any cling to it, he will suffer. As the 'Imam Mahadi' said in some of his statements:—'The power of God is on me, by order of Mahomud the messenger of God. (Salutations and peace be on him.) If I had desires on anything, and it is unlawful, he will make it lawful. If we ignorantly speak of anything, his commands will be revealed. (Salutations on him.) He also informed me that the spiritual guides and mollahs are in ignorance. As God said, "the people are ignorant," and the Prophet (God's salutations on him) collected the souls of the people who denied the Mahdi from being the spiritual guide and mollah, and compelled them to believe, dividing on them the sufferings of both worlds, internal and external, and did not satisfy the souls by these internal and external evils, and said they denied the thankful gift of God, the

Mahdi (so and so). If you do not thank God, may you be cursed. Granted he is the Mahdi, why do you deny his Mahdiship? The Prophet says—ask pardon of him, the same being asked from me. If any one has faith and confidence in the expected Mahdi, he will not suffer of God for his belief in the Mahdiship, who has properly shown his miracles. I am informed by God's Prophet (peace be on him) that miracles and sayings are useless if God shows His anger. I am informed by His Prophet (salutation be on him) that he who denies the Mahdiship denies God and the Prophet, and if any one not believes him, he is a "Kafir" (infidel), and if any one opposes him, he will be cursed in both worlds, and his property and son will be given to believers (Moslems). Be it known that he does not act except by the order of the Prophet, and the *jehad* (holy war) which had been waged against the Turks, was ordered by the Prophet (God's salutation on him). I am informed by him (God's salutation be on him) of many secrets of conquests of countries, of religions, and of laws, and no one else will succeed. "We shall always be victorious" over the disbelievers, and "he the Mahdi" (God's salutation be on him) swears and reswears that we shall always be victorious, by the will of God.

"'It was shown to me, Yaumel Keyamat (in the day of judgment), the Turks who had been killed complained to God, saying, "O God, O Lord, the Mahdi has killed us without cause." I said, "Oh God, I had shown them the reason, and warned

them of it, and they did not accept it, but followed their own mollahs, calling for proof!" Seyyed-el-Majud, that is Mahomet, appeared, and told them, "Your sins be on your own heads; my Mahdi informed you, but you did not obey him; and you followed your own mollahs." The Turks began to blame each other. The poor told the rich, that if they had advisers they would become believers (mumen). The rich said, "We have not prevented you from obeying the Mahdi, after his appearance, but ye are cowards." But the disbelief of the Government officers is from the beginning, and the time when they will believe, God knows. He says by the Prophet (salutations be on him), "Why have not the chiefs obeyed the orders from the beginning, when they obtained the order (God's salutations be on him), and his followers had much trouble and much slaughter, with the nobles and leaders of the Jews and Christians. These are the first to gain over to Moslemism; these are the races to begin with." (God's salutation be on him.) He is one of the best of all men; the Great God—God's spirit be on him. I am informed by him that the Turks will not baptize by advice, but by the Lord, except those under the mercy of God. I am informed by him (God's salutations be on him) that he will obtain followers without any trouble. (God's salutations be on him.) And I am informed by him that my friends are equal to the friends of Mahmoud as Caliph, and the people are of the same rank as the Sheikh Abdul Kadir of Jailan (who is buried at

Bagdad) possesses. The gift is from God, who grants it to any one whom He chooses. But be it known by your great knowledge, that there are a great many mollahs who are disbelievers of the expected Mahdi. They have had no belief from the beginning, and it is against their teachings that the Mahdi is from God. God makes Moslems as he likes, and makes infidels as he likes. There are many different accounts amongst the mollahs concerning the Mahdiship, but to the men of wisdom it is known that from the beginning they should not follow the examples of the mollahs. Their information is without foundation, but the true information destroys the other, and the true proverbs (of the Koran) are the Mahdi's. The proof of the Mahdi is without end. May God grant him experience to believe in the fact that he is one of the true spiritual guides, and that he is always guided by the Prophet. (Salutations be on him.) What you stated in your letter addressed to us is well known. The reply to every word is to be expected from the Imam. We thought it useless to advise too much. May God grant you the will to obey the Mahdi as Imam. This answer is plainer than the sun. Believe it, and repeat it, O people of the world. The world is like a building, who possesses it? And property, who possesses it? Any one who collects it is a fool. Return to the gate of repentance and pardon, and ask for forgiveness, that God may not harm you in any way. Give up yourself, those who possess the order from God and

His Prophet, as you have been directed by God and His Prophet. God said, "Obey Me and obey My Prophet, who is your spiritual guide and leader, and save your blood and the blood of your relations." If you do not return to your faith, the chain of God will be on your neck, and by the will of God you will be destroyed. Before you die, obey the order of the Prophet. After this you will suffer nothing but death. Although you claim to be a Mussulman, why not join the part of the victorious religion. What are you waiting for? Kill the Turks and burn their skins in spite of all the dignity they may possess; and give their arms and things to our little boys, and take possession of their guns, arms, wives, and children, as you did to Captain Ibrahim, who had fifty-six men, whom ten of our men killed. There is a place called Tir, and in that place we killed three hundred, whilst of our men only twenty were killed. The officers also of Aukak were also conquered, and delivered to us their arms, three guns, and ammunition. The commander, Osman Digma, has surrounded a place, and the defenders rose in the front of a coffee-house (samaran) and began to fire their rifles and guns in great haste. Mahmoud Aly deserted the Pasha after 1,000 men had been killed; there remained then eighty, who delivered themselves up to Osman. I inform you that they have joined us at Merki, and the soldiers of the Pasha ill-treated you to extort information. We seized the post peon and will send him to you, with commander Osman Digma's answer to us if

they are to be killed. Look at the statement we have given you about Khartoum and the number killed there by the Imam. Those who had capitulated to him were Pashas and soldiers; the others got killed in one hour. The Imam intends shortly to proceed to Egypt. One commander came from the Imam appointed to Keslah, and the soldiers now there killed him. Soldiers are now in Falak and Kowrin; the soldiers already at Keslah advanced on the Ameer. Haddah killed some of them, and the Ameer killed the rest and entered into Mudiriyalo; those who surrendered themselves to him were allowed to live. We have inquired into this matter, and the news is confirmed. Do not think we are afraid of you, for waiting so long to kill you without any cause; if God wishes we will kill you in an hour. Do not boast that you have ammunition, guns, and cannon; we have already got more than sufficient from you. We are awaiting a reply to this letter, as a favour to save you from the punishment of God, and for the sake of uniting in God and friendship. If you ask for any orders, give us good news in this world and in the other. If you deceive us, should God wish we will baptize you with the sword immediately. Should you wish to follow us, send a man to treat; then you will be under the protection of God and his Prophet. Do not deceive us, and send us a quick reply by the bearer, for we are waiting and preparing our arms. If you can trust a man, send us an answer as we did. No one can do anything without the aid of God.'

"(Signed) KIDR-BIN-ALI."

Next to Osman Digma is Sheikh Tahir, Sheikh of the principal mosque in the town. He is a very energetic man, with great fluency of expression, having that power of making and enunciating long and vague sayings that take so much with Arabs, and are considered by them eloquent in proportion to their incomprehensibility. After him is Sheikh Kidr, one of the Haddendower chiefs, who commands round Tokar, and Sheikh of the same tribe who commands at Sinkat. Such are the principal active rebel leaders, while the only one who pretends to be faithful to Government is Mahmoud Aly, chief of the Shaier, who, we are sure, is really only trimming his sails to go with both parties. We cannot, however, do otherwise than employ him, on the principle of making the best of a bad bargain.

After this slight notice of the chief natives we have to do with, a short sketch of the tribes and the country they occupy naturally comes. To begin with the latter: on the coast of the Red Sea are the provinces or mudirehs of Suakim and Massowah; further inland come Berber and Kassala; then Dongola, Khartoum, Kordofan, Senaar, and the three or four provinces lying about the source of the Nile called the Bhahal Gazar. Outside Kordofan is Darfour, the whole making up an enormous territory, about twenty-two degrees in length, and averaging eight in breadth. All this huge country has been acquired within the last fifty years. It was, however, held very loosely, and there can be very little doubt that it was only through the efforts

of Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon that the Egyptains were enabled to consolidate it. The moment the latter governor-general left, misgovernment began to tell, and, the Mahdi rising, affairs culminated in the present difficulties. It must, nevertheless, be admitted, greatly to the credit of the Egyptain Government, that their troubles would not for a long time have been so great, if they had not faithfully tried to carry out their engagements with the English Government as regarded the putting down the slave trade. Everywhere in the large tract of country, containing the provinces above mentioned, communication is rendered most difficult on account of the great scarcity of water; long stretches have often to be passed without a drop being found, or else the wells are so brackish that none but the camels can slake their thirst at them. The two great tributaries of the Nile, the White, from the highlands of the equatorial provinces, and the Blue, from the mountains of Abyssinia, join together at Khartoum and then flow on in one big river through seventeen degrees of latitude into the Mediterranean, without the latter receiving a single other affluent. At Khartoum the breadth of the rivers on either side is very considerable, and their depth is sufficient to allow the Nile steamers to ply on them all the year round. The position of Khartoum makes it the centre of trade, and therefore the point to which all the roads of Central Africa converge. The principal of these roads are as follows:—first, from Darfour *viâ* Obeid and Bara; then that from

the equatorial lakes more or less along the White Nile to Khartoum; third, from Khartoum *viâ* Senaar, Abu Haras, Kassala Sunheit, to Massowah; fourth, from Khartoum to Berber by the river, and thence by land to Suakim; lastly, from Berber again by river to Abu-Hamed, thence across the desert to Wadi Halfa, and by the river again to Cairo.

The tribes that inhabit the regions that most concern us are—

1. Bisharin Arabs, who live in the country between Berber and Suakim.

2. Haddendowa Arabs, between Suakim and Kassala. The name of their head Sheikh is Musa-bin-Adam.

3. Beni Amar, who live in the tract of country commencing near Tokar, and extending east along the whole length of Baraka River.

The above are divided into numberless sections, so distinct from each other as to form almost separate tribes; indeed, many of these sections have hereditary blood feuds between them, and only people who know Arabs can imagine the intensity of the fanaticism which now makes them act together. The only section which even pretends to be friendly are Mahomed Aly's tribe, called the Shaier, and possibly the small division called the Norab. Very little dependence can be placed on them, for there is no doubt Mahomed Aly himself is a great scoundrel. While we were talking about these tribes, and I was gathering all the information I

could, some of our spies came in and informed us that several of them were hesitating; they had heard of the large forces likely to come, and might therefore possibly be in a humour to negotiate. A letter was consequently written to Mahomed Aly to try his hand with them.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE AT SUAKIM.

APPOINTED MESS-PRESIDENT — CAMEL MEAT — DIFFICULTIES OF BAZAAR ACCOUNT—THE LINES OF DEFENCE AT SUAKIM—THE WATER SUPPLY—CAMELS LIKE SALINE WATER BEST—THE BASHI-BAZOUKS REFUSE TO DRILL—ATTEMPT AT MUTINY—THE PERSUASIVE KOORBASH—EVERYBODY SATISFIED EXCEPT THE GOVERNOR OF SUAKIM—SUAKIM DONKEYS—UNDER FIRE—A COUNTRY RIDE—MAGNIFICENT SUNSETS—COOK-SHOPS—UNDER FIRE AGAIN—ISMAIL FROM MADAME TUSSAUD'S—ZEBEHR PASHA'S NEPHEW—PRISONS AND PRISONERS IN SUAKIM—PROVISIONS SCARCE—MY HUSBAND PROPOSES TO MARCH OUT TO RELIEVE SINKAT—PLAN OF SORTIE—GENERAL BAKER'S CONSENT NECESSARY—INSPECTION OF TROOPS—QUALITY OF SOLDIERS—MAJOR GILES AND THE ENEMY'S SPIES—SHARKS IN HARBOUR — HEROIC CONDUCT OF KROOMAN — ARRIVAL OF *EURYALUS* WITH ADMIRAL HEWETT — GENERAL ASPECT OF AFFAIRS—MAHMOUD ALY FAILS TO RELIEVE SINKAT—NUMBER KILLED IN MAJOR CASSIM'S FIGHT—BEHAVIOUR OF OLD SOLDIERS OF SUAKIM GARRISON—COMPLAINTS ABOUT A MOSQUE BEING USED FOR STORES—MR. BREWSTER APPOINTED CHIEF OF THE COMMISSARIAT—ARRIVAL OF A SPY FROM SINKAT—HIS ADVENTURES—SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF ARABS—THREAT OF ATTACK—OSMAN DIGMA'S HOUSE AT SUAKIM——EMBROIDERED MAT AND CAMEL'S ORNAMENTS—INNER FORTIFIED LINES—ARRIVAL OF MAHALLAH WITH EUROPEAN POLICE—TEA ON BOARD THE *RANGER*.

THIS morning, the 10th of December, I proposed to Mr. Wylde to look after the house for him, as he always had his house full, and I have nothing to

do. Nearly all the English here came in during the morning, and we agreed to set up a mess, of which I was to be president. I therefore began to ask what there was in the house, and what could be got in the market. To my disgust I found that there was little in the house, while in the market a small quantity of camel meat was the only thing available. I did not know what to do, and began heartily to repent of my mess-presidency, for it was only now I really found out that we were in a besieged town. Fortunately, Mr. Wylde had a sheep or two, but there were no vegetables of any kind, no milk, no eggs, and so we had to fall back for the moment on tinned things. We sent a dhow to Jedda as soon as possible, but its return could not be counted upon to any exact date, because though the wind at this time of the year is fair there, yet it will have to tack on its return, thus making it a long affair, especially as the navigation amongst the reefs requires to be most carefully done. Fortunately, we have enough flour for a few days, so hope not to run out of bread. The idea of being reduced to that nasty, brown, soldier's biscuit is by no means appetizing.

The bazaar account was far more difficult than in India, and here I may as well put down my experience after ten days' trial. It is kept, to begin with, in dollars and piastres, 37½ of the latter being equivalent to one of the former. But the piastre is a name for coins of very different kinds; there are, for instance, the Government, the bazaar,

the current, and the copper piastre, all and each of them representing completely different values. Sometimes it is, as above, 37½ to the dollar, at other times 123. The piastre tariff is always worth double of the piastre current. The servants have a nasty trick of paying in the piastre current, and charging in the piastre tariff. The dollar represents, in English money, three and sevenpence, and is the only recognized big coin in the Soudan. I give as an illustration a list of a ten days' bill. The cloth to the Tokar postman is a present to the man who had brought us a letter from Tokar, and had narrowly escaped with his life; then there is hire for a canoe for my husband's servant; next a peculiar vegetable called ladies' fingers, etc., etc. It has been amusingly illustrated by Major Giles. I had been teasing Mr. Wylde about a sketch map of Abyssinia that he had drawn, on which the marks he had made to represent mountain-ranges, looked so much like scorpions that I could not resist the temptation of writing over them, scorpion No. 1, scorpion No. 2, etc. So, in revenge, he caught hold of my account-sheet, drew first a representation of a supposititious clerk to Osman Digma, then below it a caricature of myself, as chief clerk to the staff, as I copied all my husband's correspondence. Major Giles, coming in at that moment, said, "Oh, Mrs. Sartorius, we will take it out of him!" and sketched in the two lower caricatures of Mr. Wylde and his thoroughbred (Mr. Wylde being our general guide).

Looking over the list of marketing, I see sheep for a pound a piece, which is very dear for the country, the ordinary value being a dollar and a quarter. Of course they are not like English sheep; they only weigh twenty-five or thirty pounds at most, and are so small that one roasted whole can be put on the table. Eggs came from Suez, chickens from Jedda, salt from Massowah, grain from Tokar, fish from the harbour, potatoes from Greece, charcoal sometimes from Jedda, more often from Massowah, onions from Egypt, petroleum from America, beer and butter from Germany and England, vegetables and fruit from Egypt; and yet, in spite of being served by all these various countries, we are very often hard driven for next day's food.

On my first day in office, I made what arrangements I could, and then in the afternoon we went up to the fortified lines. These latter are only a small ditch, about four feet deep and three feet wide at the top, with the earth thrown up behind to a height of five or six feet. Into this parapet were driven six-feet-long stakes, at about six inches apart; they were further bound together by a long line of transverse poles. The small forts, composed of detached buildings, each surrounded by an extra large and deep ditch, were connected together by these lines. The most important was the flag-staff fort, and the small barrack next to it. The first of these two had a small upper room, which my husband occupied as head-quarters of the 1st Division, while the

ILLUSTRATED BAZAAR ACCOUNT.

second was eventually used by the European police. The description of the lines show that they themselves form no extraordinary impediment, but a quantity of mimosa thorn, of the most prickly kind, piled up to a thickness of six feet all along the outside completely stops the possibility of rushing through them. About 800 yards to the north of the flag-staff fort is the drinking-water, contained at present in a tank formed by damming a ravine with a large earthen wall, having at either end a strong fort protecting it. The tank itself dries up in February, and then wells, which eventually attain a great depth, have to be dug in its bed. Even in the last month of our sojourn here they were already forty feet below the level of the ground. Many other places seemed more likely for wells, but the soil generally contains so much salt in it that within a couple of hundred yards, from where the sweet water was found brackish, all the rest was undrinkable. There is water good enough for cattle at fort No. 4, especially as camels like it a little salt. Indeed, all the animals get accustomed to the taste, and the horses even, when first given distilled water, put their noses in and stir it about with every mark of dislike. The whole of the supply dries up about April, and men and cattle both have to take to condensed water. We much admired a very large tree that grew in the middle of the tank, probably all the more because it is the only one here above the size of a shrub. When on our way back, several flocks of sand-grouse and a few wild duck flew past us; and

they say that there are plenty of gazelle and bustard in the plains, but it would be too dangerous to go after them now.

Just as we reached the lines we found a great commotion going on, and it appeared that the Bashi-Bazouks had refused to come to drill. It has never been the Egyptian custom to drill these kind of soldiers; they were always supposed to be thorough irregulars, consequently they have invariably given great trouble, and are not to be depended on in time of necessity, while during peace, or when in garrison, they thieve, steal, and refuse to submit to any discipline. This, of course, could not be allowed, especially after the innumerable complaints that the townspeople and even Suleiman Pasha had made. Therefore, they were ordered out to drill with the rest, and in the morning had a couple of hours' marching. That experience was quite enough, and when the afternoon drill-time came, they were most mutinous, threatened their officers, and all but twenty-five refused to obey orders. The commanding officer, Yusef Bey, came in great state of mind to report to my husband, who went to their camp, made them turn out, and then called on them to state their complaints. Finding what was really the matter, he sent for four companies from the Alexandrian battalion, who were just marching off to parade, formed them up all round the mutineers, and disarmed them. This summary proceeding rather astonished the Bashi-Bazouks, and only eight stood out. Still, these eight could not be allowed to

OUR DONKEY RIDE.

escape, so my husband sent for a few officers to form a court-martial, intending to shoot one of them as an example, but before taking such an extreme measure, he tried the argument of an unlimited application of the koorbash—in this case a frightfully thick thong of hippopotamus-hide. I should not like to have seen this part, so my daughter and I hurried off as soon as the whip appeared; but I hear that the ringleader got eighty blows before he gave in, and that when the remaining seven saw the effect they heartily repented, and, throwing themselves at my husband's feet, promised future obedience. Thus the disturbance was happily ended, and all think that nothing more will come of it.

The only person who objected was Suleiman Pasha, who, sending for my husband, said that "the Bashi-Bazouks, being Albanians and volunteers, should never be flogged. They should be *asked* if they *wished* to drill, and, in case of any objection on their part, they must be allowed to go." It was impossible for my husband to argue on such extraordinary ideas of discipline in time of war, but he knew his man, and so contented himself with pointing out that the men had received three months' pay in advance, and would be only too glad of the opportunity to go away, but that if his Excellency the governor-general would give an order in writing, his wishes should be carried out, as otherwise my husband would not take the responsibility on himself of discharging 200 men who had been

got together with such difficulty at Cairo. It was enough. The moment responsibility was mentioned Suleiman Pasha gave in.

On the 11th of December we expected the *Tantah*, with troops, and Zebehr Pasha's nephew, who is to try his hand at conciliation with his old acquaintances, now amongst the rebels. But by far the most important of the questions of the day is transport. Not a camel or mule is to be got here, and though Mahmoud Aly professes to be most friendly, he does nothing, and we are afraid that he will not even keep his promise of throwing provisions into Sinkat. The above forms the gist of our letters that we are writing to-day so as to be ready for the post, which leaves to-morrow. I am glad to say we shall have no more walking, for Mr. Brewster has kindly found two capital donkeys for us, with good saddles of the regular Egyptian pattern. The saddles are comfortable enough if it were not for their tendency to turn round, the donkey of the country being a great deal too sharp to allow himself to be girthed tightly. It is amusing to watch one of these sharp-looking little creatures swell himself out the moment the girths are touched. The donkey-boy may work as hard as he likes, jamming his foot against the beast so as to get a good leverage, and yet the moment the rider approaches the girths are somehow as loose as ever.

It has been raining hard all day, and the sky is still very much overcast, so we hope it will continue, as the heat in the middle of the day is more

than comfortable, and, besides, it promises well as regards water when the troops march out. In the evening, after dinner, an orderly came rushing down in great haste, giving notice that the enemy were making an attack. He was in such a state of mind that he could not tell us any detail, but I was not nervous, as I felt sure my husband would have sent a note if there had been anything serious. So my step-daughter and I went to the top of the house. The rebels were discharging their rifles blindly into the lines. We saw a good many flashes from the direction of the enemy, who must have been close round the water-forts; but it soon became evident that nothing serious was intended, and about 11 p.m., the moon having risen, everything became quiet, and we went to bed. If it were not for the serious reality, I could say a good deal about the very pretty sight this night firing is, for each flash lights up the place about, while nothing can be more exciting than a rolling fire from a comparatively long line. We generally could tell whereabouts the enemy were, by the position of lamps in the water-forts, which were hung outside the walls in the direction of the town, so as to prevent being fired into by their own side.

The *Tantah* came in on the 12th of December, but it is not mail day, as they have such a quantity of stores to discharge that she cannot go till to-morrow. We have had a most pleasant donkey-ride this afternoon. The country is beautifully green after the late rains, and one can hardly believe that in three

months' time all this grassy plain will be a howling dusty desert, without a particle of vegetation except the scanty leaves of the umbrella mimosa—a very curious shrub tree, the trunk of which breaks out into a number of arched branches that grow regularly on all sides, and seem to support a flat surface of delicate green leaves. These mimosa bushes are indigenous to the Soudan, and grow to a height of from three to seven feet, thus forming a species of cover which thoroughly suits the native ambush style of attack, for the whole plain might be alive with men, and yet you might pass through them without knowing that a single one was there.

I have learnt, in my ride to-day, to keep the donkey-boy on the off side, and, if I have to slip, to do so on the left. I am not at all sure but that the donkey enjoys the trouble I am at to keep on. He probably considers that a kaffir (infidel), and above all a woman kaffir, has no business to back an orthodox donkey. Besides, he may be extra proud and consider himself above the common herd, for he belongs to the sub-governor, Mahmoud Effendi, and is very well got up in handsome trappings, with the bearing-chain of pure silver. We were rather late coming back, for, while taking tea at the flagstaff fort, our attention was taken up in watching the exquisite effects of the setting sun on the distant hills, the wonderful clearness of the atmosphere rendering the colours brilliant in the extreme. Nothing could transcend the tints reflected from the granite rocks, of which these hills are formed,

their rough, rugged outline standing out in wonderful boldness against the masses of clouds, which with brightest hues hover above them, and cast their light fleeting shadows in exquisite transparency here and there over the whole landscape. As the evening progresses, the deep blue shades of approaching night gradually envelop the landscape, while the sun-tipped rocks disappear one by one, till at last the mountains stand as a sullen mass struggling to keep their places against the glow of the sun that has set. In a few moments even this has disappeared, darkness covers everything, and we turn away with a sort of regret, as when leaving a beautiful picture not likely to be seen again. There is no gloaming here. The sun does not favour us with twilight in the East. As Bertram says in "Rokeby"—

> "No pale gradations quench his ray,
> No twilight dews his wrath allay;
> With disc-like battle-target red,
> He rushes to his burning bed,
> Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
> Then sinks at once—and all is night."

From this scene of Nature's grand repose, we turned suddenly into another, which, though not so splendid, was very picturesque and most interesting, viz. the bazaar. The few shops are lit up, and are crowded with Arabs, Egyptian soldiers, Bashi-Bazouks, Greeks, women with faces covered up carrying and leading children, all talking and shouting together, and quarrelling over every piastre; but there was also a powerful smell of mutton fat,

kerosine oil, and garlic, which soon drove us on. It was very difficult to force one's way through the crowd, as the bazaar, though narrow at any time, is made still more so by the shopkeepers taking up part of it to place their wares upon. There was one particular cook-shop on the right-hand side, especially frequented by the Bashi-Bazouks, where we saw a lot of men enjoying a mess of *kabobs* and rice, eating away with their fingers with profound enjoyment, probably all the stronger as the fowl that had been made into *kabobs* must have been a stolen one.

We had rather a large dinner-party that night. My husband came down early, intending to take it easy, and therefore, as such things always happen, the enemy came close to the works and began firing steadily into them. Everybody got up from the table. My husband wrote a note to Captain Darwell to fire a few shots, and then he and his officers got on their horses, and were at the lines in a few minutes. We mounted, as usual, to the roof of the house, taking with us Ismail, Mr. Wylde's dragoman or factotum. When we got there the firing from the enemy's side had ceased, but, as I afterwards heard, the spies that evening had reported a large gathering of the rebels, and so the troops kept on the lines for two or three hours, until the moon rose. In the meanwhile, the ships fired several rounds each from their big guns, in the direction where it was surmised the enemy might be. It was a very pretty sight; the flash momentarily lit up the whole place, the

white walls of the houses suddenly started into sight, then there was a tremendous roar that shook our house to its foundations, after which came the whiz of the shell going further and further into the distance, till at last another smaller flash and a more subdued roar told that the iron missile had accomplished its mission. Never before had we felt what it was to be in the midst of war, nor did we understand, till now, the great effect the sound of artillery must have on soldiers in battle.

Ismail was very excited; he had something to say for every shot that was fired. "'Im very debbel!" he exclaimed, as the *Ranger's* gun went off. "Why, Ismail?" I asked. "Oh, 'im make more noise; 'im a regular good one!" As things subsided and his excitement cooled a little, he began to talk of English things, and how he had been to London and seen Madame Tussaud's exhibition, and how the sitting figure representing a spectator had astonished him, because it moved its head so naturally that he thought at times it was alive. While thus gazing intently, some spectators came up, examined him, his native dress, and tarboosh carefully, and exclaimed, "Here's a new figure, but he's not numbered!" Whereupon he started up, saying, "I no wax figure; I real man!" and walked off, much to the confusion of the spectators aforesaid. From the way he told the story, I do not think he was pleased or enjoyed the joke, and I fancy the reason is, that one of the Mussulman's ways of abusing another is to tell him that he is as stupid as a stuffed figure. He was

going on like this, when the moon rising put an end to all expectation of further attack for that evening, as it is always the custom of the Arabs to attack before the moon rises or immediately after it sets.

On the 13th a long interview was held with Zebehr Pasha's nephew, who wants to go out as soon as possible. He declares there is no danger, but requires a couple of camels to carry himself, one of his men, and a little baggage. These have been found for him with great difficulty, through the instrumentality of a very obliging Syrian, M. Dubas. They cost eighty-five dollars, *i.e.* nearly £16: in ordinary times the price would be less than half that amount. Sheikh Osman, one of the small Shiekhs of the town, who is employed by my husband to get spies, has sent out two men to feel the way before him, and to report what was the kind of reception Zebehr Pasha's nephew was likely to receive.

An official visit was made to the prison to-day, on account of the complaints of some of the prisoners that they were unfairly treated. These turned out to be true, the facts of the case being that one of the prisoners is Kalil Bey, the late prefect of police, who was in office in Alexandra during the massacres. When tried, he barely escaped with his life, and got seven years instead of the hanging he so richly deserved. It appeared that he had a room to himself, his own cook, his cigarettes, etc., and he and two or three others like him were never made to work with the rest. After the visit all this was very soon

changed, much to their disgust, and that of the Egyptian officials, who insisted that the mere fact of Kalil being a Bey entitled him to extra consideration. Besides, no doubt, these latter did not see that the killing of so many Christians was, after all, any great misdemeanour. Another result was the release of several men who were confined on suspicion of dealing with the rebels. Here was illustrated a very curious phase of Egyptian character, and one which a European cannot understand, for these men were confined most rigorously on the merest suspicion, while Cadi, who was brother-in-law to Sheikh Tahir, the religious leader of the rebels, was called into council by Suleiman Pasha whenever anything important was to be done, although week by week some one or other member of his family went off to join the rebels.

Early next morning a boat went with the vakeel down the coast to get cattle and bring them up here, for the question of provisioning the town, as well as the soldiers, is getting a very serious one. The *Tantah* went off at 10 a.m., taking with it a letter to General Baker, which put me in great state of mind, as my husband therein proposes to advance on Sinkat, and relieve the garrison by putting in provisions and taking away the women and children. I myself cannot help thinking it most dangerous to move out with the troops we have. My husband, after speaking of the probability that Mahmoud Aly would fail in carrying out his promises, proposes to get ready sixty camels, load them with

grain, and march with the following force for Sinkat, viz. Egyptian soldiers, 1,300; Soudanese, 450; Turkish infantry, 60; cavalry, 200; artillery, one gun, one rocket, the latter being all that could be manned. By marching at 2 a.m., he expected to get to a place near Handub, where there is water, early in the day, thus giving time to form a zeriba, and also make an enclosed position on the top of some isolated small hills overlooking the water. In the latter he would leave the Turkish infantry and Bashi-Bazouks, together with the gun and rocket, the whole under the command of Major Holroyd. Marching out from there next day, three miles would take him on to the entrance of the wadi or valley, which extends for about another three miles, and during the passage of which the attack would probably be made. After this the ground is comparatively open till within a few miles of Sinkat, where another pass has to be forced. At the first wadi a small entrenchment was to be thrown up, where a few men could be left for some days and thus protect the return. Mahmoud Aly and his tribe were to accompany the force, but always well in advance. In this way, if successful, the garrison would be relieved of all useless mouths, and provisioned for some time to come. The expedition was, however, dependent on General Baker's consent, as he had given the most positive orders that no movement was to be made until his arrival.

On the 14th of December there was a grand inspection of all the troops in camp. Captain

Walker kindly escorted us. He got us a bench from one of the deserted houses, and so we watched the parade while sitting under the shade of some palm trees, until my husband called us, and then we took up our position close to the flagstaff. The Egyptian battalions on the whole marched past well, although the company officers looked very dirty and slack. The best were, of course, the Turks of the gendarmerie; the Bashi-Bazouks, for want of drill, were hardly able to get past, and they seemed to me to have a lot of boys amongst them, besides many old men, who were unable to keep up with the rest. While on this topic, I may say here that thirty-nine of the Bashi-Bazouks have been picked out to be sent back at once, as they are either deaf, blind, or lame. I do not mean partially, but completely deaf and quite blind. The Massowah blacks looked well, but they were very few in number; the old soldiers of the garrison, dressed in white *galoubiehs*, or long blouses, appeared just like the men who had bolted, and would bolt, on every conceivable opportunity.

After the inspection, the troops went off to be instructed in the formation of squares. Nothing could possibly exceed the general inaptitude to learn than the unwillingness displayed by officers and men. None of the officers had their heart in it, and I am afraid my husband used a good deal more than the orthodox language before he had finished for the morning. I am not at all astonished at Colonel Harington's answer, when asked what the

official language was. "Oh," said he, "Arabic and bad English!" Major Giles has just come in from a long morning's outing, for while he was at drill he saw three mounted men watching him, and, his suspicions being aroused, he edged quietly towards them; but they were on the alert, and as soon as they found they were observed, they made tracks, rapidly pursued by the Turkish cavalry. Their start was, however, too great, and they got off after a long chase, though one of them was obliged to abandon his horse, after hamstringing the poor brute. The rider escaped among the bushes, and the horse was recognized as belonging to one of the officers killed in the late action.

In the afternoon we had a very pleasant row in Mr. Brewster's boat. The water is most beautifully clear, and looks very tempting to bathe in, but the people say there are a number of large sharks in the harbour. It was only yesterday or the day before that one got itself somewhat entangled under the causeway bridge, and kept splashing about there for several minutes, giving people a very good warning of what they might expect if they went into the sea. It is very odd, though, that the small negro boys go swimming about, and yet no one has ever heard of an accident to them. A curious instance of this was told me to-day by a naval officer. He said one of the few men who had got the Albert gold medal was a big, strong Krooman, a native of Western Africa, and he had won this rare distinction by jumping into the sea amongst

a lot of sharks, after a boy who had fallen from the ship. One of the sharks seized the poor lad, but the Krooman, diving rapidly, got hold of him and literally pulled him out of the shark's mouth. Unfortunately, it was too late, for the boy was so badly hurt that he died as he was put on board. The Krooman was made much of for his wonderful gallantry, and was entered on board a man-of-war; but, unluckily, drink was his failing, and prevented his getting the promotion all wished to give him. It seemed such a pity, for great bravery in the saving of life is, after all, so much more satisfactory to hear about than great bravery in the taking of it. While going on towards the mouth of the harbour we met our Jedda dhow, and were much disgusted to find that she was in quarantine. It was most tantalizing, for we wanted everything, above all, vegetables, and these she was sure to have.

We saw very little of my husband: he just came for meals, and then rushed back to camp again. So we were a good deal thrown upon our own resources, which mostly consisted of letter-writing, as books there were few, and newspapers none. Still, plenty of people came in during the day, for Mr. Wylde's great hospitality had made this a welcome house to everybody. We had also just heard that the *Euryalus,* with Admiral Hewett, was coming in a day or two.

The position here is getting very serious, and my husband evidently thinks that the relief of

Sinkat is more difficult than ever. He is preparing to move out, but at the same time is writing two very strong letters to General Baker, in order, as he says, that the former may stir up the Cairo authorities with it. It comes out now, that Mahmoud Aly can or will do nothing. Sinkat has very little provision left, and four thousand rebels hem it in. Tokar has provisions, but no ammunition, and is also completely surrounded; whilst, thirteen miles from here, Osman Digma is at Tamanib, with some 6,000 men. Instead of the large numbers reported to have been killed by the Soudanese, in the fight of the 4th instant, the true number is only 433. The Arabs are very exultant, and thoroughly believe Osman Digma's promise to make the powder fired at them become water, so they would assuredly throw themselves on the bayonets of a square if they had the chance. This is the opinion of my husband, which he has just written officially to Cairo. As to the men here, Suleiman Pasha says that on the night before we arrived, and when there was an alarm, the soldiers left the gates, bolted into the muderieh, or Government-house, and hid themselves under the tables and divans. The Arabs are not really very numerous, in comparison to the extent of country they inhabit, but all the men are available for fighting, as the women and children do every other kind of work.

Several of the inhabitants have been here to-day, complaining about a mosque having been taken up

for the purpose of housing commissariat stores. This was most objectionable, as we knew that many of the Egyptians themselves would be only too glad to put the blame on the shoulders of the English officers. Indeéd, a report has already been spread that a lot of pork is in the mosque. My husband, therefore, sent for Mr. Brewster, appointed him chief of the commissariat, and directed that the mosque should be emptied as soon as possible. My husband considered it most important to get on well with the inhabitants, and thus prove to them that under the English *régime* their customs and prejudices shall be attended to as much as possible. The greatest difficulty is undoubtedly the Egyptian official, who, feeling himself superseded, cannot be expected to look complacently on the foreigner who takes his place, and so brings into play a power of quiet obstruction that soon gets beyond anybody's patience to endure.

The much-looked-for spy has come in from Sinkat. He had got his letter doubled up inside a leather amulet, of which these people have always two or three on their arms, containing usually a verse of the Koran. I at once took possession of it, and keep it as a great curiosity. He says that when approaching Sinkat at night he had to hide for several hours behind a big stone, while just on the other side of it, and within four or five paces, were a circle of the enemy, whose conversation was by no means reassuring, as they declared their intention of chaining and then cutting the throat of anybody who was coming

to help the beleaguered garrison. He dared not move for a long time, but at last, creeping away, keeping the stone between them, he took refuge some distance off in a small cave. There he lay until the next night, when, making a wide circuit, he managed to pierce the enemy's lines on the other side. Early in the morning, approaching the fort, he called out "Tewfik, Tewfik!" Tewfik Bey happened to be close by, and ordered him to be allowed in. On his return, he was actually caught. By good luck, Tewfik Bey's letter was not found, but, suspicion being strong, he was tied up and got a severe beating. He no doubt had a narrow shave, but, luckily for him, some of his relations were amongst the rebels, and at night they secretly untied him and let him go. Such was the cause of his long delay, and in proof he showed the very visible marks of his beating. But whatever risk he ran, the twenty dollars he got seemed fully to make it up, as far as he himself was concerned.

The calm way the spy mentioned his beating reminds me of a curious custom amongst these Arabs. Before a boy is considered man enough to think of marrying, his friends get up a large party, the principal feature of which is a sort of dance, where the boy stands in the centre, whilst the dancers, each armed with a heavy whip, carol gaily around, each one giving him a good hard cut as he passes. The boy has to bear all this without wincing; if he utters the least sound or quails in the slightest, it has to be gone through some other time. If he passes the

ordeal, he then becomes "a man." The Soudanese, and I believe these same Arabs also, have another kind of contest much in the same way. Some half-dozen or so argue on the beauty of their various mistresses, till at last one of them gets so excited that he rushes out to the front, shouting, "She"—meaning his lady-love—"has one brother." Upon which his rival gives him one cut with his whip, at the same time calling out in his turn, "Mine has two brothers," and accordingly gets two cuts, and so on, till one or the other gives in, or both get tired. The whips are no joke, and the cuts are viciously laid on, so much so that severe flesh-wounds are made. These are kept open in order to make the scar as big as possible, because such marks are looked on with the same pride that a German student regards those he has received in his duels.

All the troops are being employed in strengthening the lines, as yesterday, the 15th of December, a woman in the bazaar overheard and reported a conversation about an intended attack. It appears that in the hut next to her a slave woman was living who belonged to one of the rebels outside, and her owner had sent a man in to tell her to come out at once and join him, as they were going to attack Suakim next night. There was no reason to doubt the information, except that the moon rose at 9.30, and, according to their usual method of attack, sufficient time was not left for the enemy to assemble. I was present when the police prefect brought the woman to my husband, in order that she should

repeat her evidence before him. She was a very ugly little black individual, who never seemed to have washed herself or her clothes. She had on a sort of jacket and petticoat, with the usual burnous sort of cloak covering her face. She wore a necklace of large coloured glass beads, and from her nose hung a huge ring. She stank so that we left the house, and, getting upon our donkeys, went to see the men at their work. From there we continued our ride outside the forts, taking care to keep a sharp look-out for any trace of the enemy. We also visited Osman Digma's house, situated in the suburbs of the part of the town on the mainland.

It is a long low house, without any upper storey. The courtyard is entered through a small door. In the house itself is a single large entrance-room, and three small ones beyond. The furniture consisted of a lot of bedsteads, which, ranged along the wall and covered with matting or cloth, form divans. There were some common carpets and sutrinjees on the floor. From the roof hung two or three ordinary kerosine lamps and a very dirty glass chandelier, several pendants of which were wanting. In the inner room, evidently the favourite wife's, was a rough sofa bench, at the back of which, and on the wall, was hung a mat covered with red cloth, embroidered with glass beads and cowrie shells. This piece of work is curious, because it is a good specimen of what every girl who hopes to get married has to make up and present to her accepted lover, according to the custom obtain-

ing in the Soudan. Beside these things there were several camel ornaments, made much in the same way, and used to adorn the animals on gala days. Not far from the house is Sheikh Tahir's dwelling, forming part of the mosque where he usually officiates. Near these two lived the Cadi, all of them, we believe, being much of a muchness and thorough rebels, although Suleiman Pasha insists upon trusting the Cadi.

We had rather a long outing, as our way was blocked by the high walls of the inner lines, which, joining house to house, block up nearly all the roads. This makes the defence very easy, as a few men on each of the flat-topped houses can keep a long space clear without danger to themselves, circumstances under which the Egyptian soldier fights his best. By-the-by, the *Euryalus* came in to-day, the 16th of December, and my husband went to call on Admiral Hewett.

On the 19th the *Mahallah* arrived, with forty-seven of the European police under Major Maletta, also a lot of Bashi-Bazouks and the gendarmerie band, the latter of whom, if they cannot fight, can always be employed on some garrison duty, and so relieve the fighting men. By way of a grand amusement, we went to tea on board the *Ranger*. What a wonderful difference there is between the *Zagazig*, the steamer in which we came down to Suakim, and this vessel. Nothing could possibly have been dirtier than the first, while nothing could be cleaner or more ship-shape than the latter. Everything seems so exactly

in its place, the enormous guns have not a speck on them, and the huge shells seem to be placed there more for ornament than anything else. Another thing that one notices always on board an English naval ship is the great hospitality one meets with, and in Captain Darwell we found the most friendly of hosts.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS IN CAMP.

My Husband makes a Reconnaissance towards Handub—My Nervousness owing to his Delay—Relieved by seeing Camels—Their Speed—Bashi-Bazouks driving them in—Numbers taken—Suleiman Pasha wants to give them up—His Ideas—Refuses to allow Massowah Soldiers to remain—Want of Revolvers for Officers and Shoes for Men—Our Farmyard—Horses and Camels always saddled, as in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"—Major Giles's Reconnaissance—Bashi-Bazouks not to be trusted under Fire—Dinner to the Admiral—Guests—Wild Flowers and Table Ornaments—More Firing from the Enemy—Arrival of General Baker—Vessels in Harbour—News of Zebehr Pasha's Nephew—Parade for General Baker—Dinner on Board the *Euryalus*—Luxury of Naval Officers—Christmas Day at Suakim—Thoughts of Home—Christmas Dinner-party—Members of the Mess, all Vagrom Men—General Baker determined to go to Massowah—The Last Day of the Year—Summary of Events—Arrival of Sheikh Magranee.

This morning, the 20th of December, my husband started at 4 a.m., with Major Giles and 250 cavalry, guided by Mr. Wylde, in order to make a reconnaissance towards the hills in the direction of Handub. The Arab cavalry were of course not ready, nor indeed had any preparation been made at the time the parade was ordered. Even the divisional staff

officer, Major Izzet Effendi, was calmly sleeping, although he himself had translated the orders into Arabic. We ourselves got up and saw my husband off, as we felt very anxious, this being the first time he was to go out so far. He told me they were to return by 11 a.m., and about that time we began to watch anxiously to see some signs of their coming out. Colonel Harington had sent out a party under Yusef Bey to meet them, and to give whatever help might be necessary. But still hour after hour passed, and I was getting more and more nervous, when all of a sudden Colonel Harington, or one of the party who happened to be looking through the telescope, saw something white in the distance. These he soon made out to be camels, driven by a few cavalry. It took *such* a load off my mind, for, if anything had happened, some one of the cavalry would already have been in to give the news. They told me two riderless horses had arrived half an hour ago, but luckily I did not see them, for I was nervous enough without that. Soon more and more camels appeared, then a large herd of bullocks, then sheep and donkeys, and lastly a messenger with a pencil note from my husband, saying he would arrive shortly. Mr. Brewster proposed our going out to meet him, so the donkeys were sent for, and out we went.

I had never seen camels, or rather dromedaries, like these: they are long, thin animals, with a tremendous power of speed. When any of them broke away, it required the cavalry to put their horses at full gallop before being able to catch them

up. The rough sketch Major Giles made for me was meant as a part caricature, but it really is exact, for the camels of this country, when going at full speed, throw out their legs just as in the illustration. Luckily, the Bashi-Bazouks in the cavalry were adepts at driving cattle. Their manœuvres much interested us, for, standing as we were on fort No. 1, we had a good view of all the ground about. At last they got the first batch in, and at the same time Mr. Wylde came up and told us my husband was close behind, and that he had made a most successful raid. Just then we saw him coming over the hill, and a moment or two after he joined us, and after giving some orders for the proper guarding and feeding of the loot he had taken, we returned home to get the lunch that all were more than ready for. Five or six men, suspicious characters, had been made prisoners at the same time as the camels, but when they were examined they turned out to be people who had brought in a few sheep for sale some days ago. As this was a kind of thing to be much encouraged, they were released. They tried to get all the camels back, but were told that the ownership must first be proved, as there was little doubt but that these camels belonged to rebels, and had been entrusted to a few of the so-called friendly tribes in order that they might safely graze in the plains below the hills. In the end, a committee, of my husband and six of the officers and native merchants of the town, decided that all the male camels should be valued and paid for, the female camels being exchanged for males on

the same condition. Ditto for the cows and ewes. The number of camels taken were 260; bullocks, 80; sheep, 180; and donkeys, 8.

Suleiman Pasha sent for my husband this afternoon, and said that the friendly tribes claimed all the cattle taken, and proposed to give them up. But my husband objected, saying, "If they belong to the friendly tribes, they have acted most unfriendly in not giving us anything when they knew we wanted cattle for meat, and camels for carriage. Next, in case I had to go out, I must have camels; if the owners were well paid, we should get more. Above all, the committee consider that in all probability almost, if not all, the animals belong to the enemy." "Ah," then said Suleiman Pasha, "if the committee think that, we must not pay at all." "That will not do," answered my husband, "for we want more, and therefore must invite confidence by carefully paying. It is better that the enemy should supply us, even if we pay them, than that we should get no supplies at all; and they cannot do any harm to us with our money, for no ammunition is to be bought." My husband told me this when he came back. He was also very angry with Suleiman Pasha, as the latter insisted on sending back to Massowah the Soudanese soldiers that had come in the *Gafferiah*, on the plea of private information that Ras-al-Ullah was going to attack Massowah at once. Colonel Iskander Bey, whom my husband had sent up, reported, on the contrary, that everything was quiet, and that the above Abyssinian chief only complained that the caravans

were looted on Egyptian territory by bands of robbers, whose chiefs were runaway Abyssinians protected by the Egyptian authorities. He made also various other complaints, all of which he had very good grounds for. Nothing could have been easier than to make terms, but Suleiman Pasha would do nothing except insist on the danger to Massowah. So my husband was unable to get his own way, although he represented to Suleiman Pasha that sending these Soudanese back quite stopped his proposed move for the relief of Sinkat. I copied a letter to Cairo for my husband to-day, in which, besides reporting the above and regretting his consequent inability to succour Sinkat, he complains of the officers not all having revolvers, the few they have being of different patterns. Also the want of a proper amount of ammunition, of shoes, etc., although of the latter they have a quantity in the gendarmerie stores, which my husband had ordered from Messrs. W. Watson and Co., of 27, Leadenhall Street.

Some of the cows lately raided were kept in our courtyard, and so we have quite a large farmyard. Let us look down from the verandah now, and see of what it is composed. First are the horses, which are always kept ready saddled in case of the enemy appearing, and the officers who might be in the house being required at the lines. This reminds one forcibly of the picture drawn by Sir W. Scott of border war in his "Lay of the Last Minstrel." So true it is to life that I am tempted to insert here a

parody written by one of our mess, which exactly describes our situation—

Egyptian soldiers, funky still,
Waited the sign of the officer's will;
Camels, steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Several more fed free in stall—
Such was the custom in Suakim hall.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these sentries armed by night?
They watch to hear the Arab howling,
They watch to hear the bugle sounding,
They watch 'gainst Soudan's plucky tribes,
Lest Tahir or Kidr or Osman's powers
Threaten Suakim's coral towers,
From hill or plain or Tamanib's sides.

But to return: there are two cows, several goats, five or six sheep, two camels, a quantity of fowls, with half a dozen turkeys solemnly gobbling amongst them. The admiral's mule, a very fine one, was also there, generally in a state of intense heat, having been *exercised* (?) by one of the midshipmen. Now and then there is a great commotion in the yard, owing to a horse getting loose and trying to fight all the others, or else it is the piteous screams of some goat, who has been caught by a vicious chestnut too near his grass—the latter making a regular custom of catching any goat who comes near by the scruff of the neck, lifting him up, and shaking him like a rat. An immediate rush has to be made to the rescue, otherwise the goat would have but short shrift. The whole is completed by some

pigeons we have up in the verandah, a Christmas present from Mr. Brewster.

We have now, for the first time since we have been in Suakim, a good supply of delicious milk. No one knows what a treat it is except those who have had to do without, and have, besides, been short of fresh provisions. We shall not suffer from the latter any longer, for the *Gafferiah* has come back from Massowah, bringing a lot of cattle. Also Mahmoud Aly's vakeel has sent £100 worth, and M. Dubas has supplied some. If we only had good bread, flour, and eggs, we should be content, and these we expect in a couple of days from Suez and Jedda.

Major Giles, with his Turkish cavalry, made a reconnaissance on the 22nd of December in the direction of Tamanib, where Osman Digma is encamped. He got near the place where Major Cassim and his Soudanese were killed, but he was not able to examine the battle-field, as the enemy appeared in large numbers about a mile away, and, on account of the Bashi-Bazouks he had with him having had only a few days' drill, it was not advisable to bring them under fire too soon. Therefore, rightly considering discretion was the better part of valour, he quietly came back again. Lieutenant Lindsay, R.N., was with him. Not deeming it right to bring the Bashi-Bazouks under fire as yet makes me very nervous, for I cannot understand how the English officers are going to get the men drilled in time. We went out to see the parade this afternoon,

and the formation of squares is still done very badly and without any appearance of intelligence on the part of the native officers, while the recruits, *i.e.* nearly all the Turks, can hardly be expected to know much in a month, which will be the extent of drill that they will get. Zebehr Pasha's Soudanese will have even less time, while the old soldiers of the garrison are as bad as recruits; the Massowah men being only slightly better. It is to be hoped the enemy will not fight, and will be kept off by the look of the men when in a large body together.

On Sunday, the 22nd of December, supplies having come in a little more freely, we determined to give a dinner to the admiral, although my husband thought it very hard lines to make him come away from his comfortable ship, to our rather rough fare. We invited all those we could to meet him, and I wrote down the names, as afterwards it will be interesting to look back and think of those who were with us then. To begin with, there is the admiral, looking every inch a sailor. He has numberless decorations, keeps constantly adding to them, and will no doubt end in the peerage. He has twice earned the V.C., and that seems to me a distinction above all others. Captain Hastings and Lieutenant Graham, his flag captain, came with him. The other captains of the vessels were—Captain Nesham, of the *Woodlark*, who has just come from a three-years' cruise in the Persian Gulf; and Captain Darwell, of the *Ranger*. Then there

were Captain Crowe, of the *Coquette*, and Lieut.-Colonel Harington, chief of my husband's staff, and formerly of the Rifle Brigade; Major Giles, of the Sindh Horse, who here commands the Turkish cavalry (the last place he had come from was Afghanistan, where he had served at the same time as my husband); Mr. Oliphant, one of the residents; Captain Forrestier Walker, who went up with General Hicks as far as Khartoum and his first expedition to Gebel-Ain, or the two hills, where he got very ill, and had to come back with Major Martin, and on recovering he joined General Baker's force as correspondent to the *Daily News*; Mr. Brewster, the head of the Customs; and last, but not least, our pleasant friend Mr. Wylde, thus, with ourselves, making up a party of fifteen. There was a good deal of difficulty about the table, for in Suakim dinner-parties have hitherto consisted of at most four or five people; but, by the help of a couple of local carpenters and rough boarding, the original table was lengthened out, and, when covered with two tablecloths, looked perfectly magnificent. Flowers (garden) were completely *non est*, so my daughter and myself, accompanied by a small party, rode out in the afternoon and got some wild specimens. An ornament which would not be easily found on an English table was a bottle-bird's nest, hanging very prettily from the branch of the prickly mimosa. During our ride we found also a yellow kind of foxglove, and some pretty little wild flowers. The convolvulus, of which there were several sorts, was too fragile to

take away from its stalk. But if there was not much variety in our flowers, the same could not be said of our crockery and plate, which, beginning with really valuable china and plate, very rapidly came down to the commonest delf and the black-handled kitchen knife.

Tinned provisions were naturally predominant, but our wines were anyhow good, for they were part of what had been amongst General Hicks's stores. I am afraid the dinner was rather long, for the servants were not accustomed to see so many people; and I suspect the old Portuguese cook was more than half drunk. Still, I think we had a very pleasant party. The admiral went off rather early, and the rest of us had a round game in the verandah.

We had a few more shots fired into us last night, but we are getting gradually accustomed to this, and did not even go out to look at it.

General Baker arrived to-day, the 23rd, in the *Mansurah*. As usual, she had had a narrow shave of running on the reefs, for just as day broke they found themselves fifty miles out of their reckoning, and almost on the top of a bank. The trip before the same vessel had brought Colonel Harington, when the captain had fully succeeded in running her on the rocks on which they were for over twelve hours. Fortunately for the Khedivial Company, these steamers were all built long ago, and therefore of much better iron than now, and consequently they bear the strain which their captains and pilots are

always putting them to. With General Baker came a lot of correspondents; also a number of Europeans of all nations, who had come to act as scouts. Principal amongst the native officers was stout little Colonel Abdul Russak. My husband went on board the *Mansurah* to report himself, and all then came on shore to see the governor-general, and to give him notice of the supreme powers his Highness the Khedive had given to General Baker.

We had a large number at tiffin that day at our mess; eighteen sat down at the table, and all the afternoon deputations kept pouring in to see the new commander-in-chief. The harbour is looking very gay, for we have now five English men-of-war, the *Euryalus*, *Sphinx*, *Ranger*, *Woodlark*, and *Coquette*; the two Egyptians, *Gafferiah* and *Tor*; and several Khedivial boats, while several dhows, large and small, fill the port to an extent Suakim has never seen before. General Baker took up his quarters in the next house to us for a day or two, till the big house in camp had been got ready for him. The news from Cairo is that Zebehr Pasha is after all not to come; in fact, he has been played a trick again. The Soudanese having been raised through his instrumentality, it seems rather hard lines that he does not come in command, according to the bargain made with him. We hear that Zebehr Pasha's nephew, when he went out, proceeded to Osman Digma's camp, and instead of being, as he expected, well received, he was, on the contrary, seized, imprisoned in a small hut, and his things

taken away from him. For two days he was in great danger, his life being with difficulty saved at the instance of some of his former acquaintances. At the end of this time, a note coming from Sheikh Tahir, who was then at Tokar, asking that he should be sent up there, he accordingly went, and, excepting his safety, we heard nothing more of him.

Although it was the day before Christmas, there was a grand parade of all available troops for the commander-in-chief's inspection. They were formed up outside the lines, and made a great show as long as they stood still, but many of them are still unable to march past. After a little drill, a close inspection of the lines followed, and it was determined to erect some more small outpost forts, and to cut down the length of the outer lines as much as possible. Admiral Hewett came in the afternoon to see General Baker. The admiral has a very determined manner of speaking, such as makes one sure that he would carry out anything he had resolved on. It is also always interesting to see a man who has the reputation of being the bravest of the brave, and is the hero of the song, "The Midshipmite." General Baker afterwards interviewed a lot of Sheikhs, and gave them messages of conciliation that they were to forward to all the rebel chiefs about. He at the same time warned them of the troops that were still to come, and which would enable him to enforce his wishes if the rebels would not listen to fair words. We dined with the admiral on board the *Euryalus*, and I must say that sailors

may have hard times now and then, but they have the pull of land-lubbers in such times as these, for they carry with them all their comforts. There was even ice on board, while the state cabins were most handsomely and comfortably furnished. The dinner was a very good one—far better, I am afraid, than we could manage to give the admiral a day or two ago. After dinner we amused ourselves with a round game. I lost as usual, but, as my husband won, I intended to recoup myself from his winnings. It was a very dark night, the moon not having risen, so the admiral ordered a lot of portfires and other coloured lights to be lighted and held over the sides of the boats, which were slung up alongside. We were thus enabled to see our way right into the harbour, and much admired the pretty effect.

Christmas Day! What a difference from home! Here the weather is most lovely, calm, and pleasantly warm, a beautiful sun shining, while the atmosphere is so delicious that one seems to draw in fresh life at every breath. Looking out on the landscape, the colours of the distant hills are vivid in the extreme. The plain in front, as a middle distance, diversified by long stretches of dark mimosa, has a perfect foreground in the shape of the white coral-built houses of the town, with the Christmas flags displayed over the various consulates. Towards the sea, the harbour is a picture in itself, filled as it is with war-vessels. But how everything tells of war! Even the condensing steamer close by us is a reminder, for it has to be carefully looked after, in case the enemy

should cut us off from water, or destroy the wells. Although there appears to be no one in yonder plain, yet we cannot make certain that an enemy is not hidden under its bushes, and that half an hour would not change all this peace and calm into the fearful scenes of a desperate battle.

How totally different from the home where we have left most of our dearest relations and friends, and to which our thoughts naturally return! We think of the church bells that are just now ringing, the crowds of people we should meet in going there, the comfortable house, and so on; but we *do not* regret the probable awful sleet and rain that we should get in our faces as we came back from service, the landscape all obscured by fog and mist, the muddy roads and the bursting water-pipes, and the demand for Christmas-boxes that would meet us for the next week; and, after all, the excitement of possible fighting at any one moment is not a disagreeable sensation. I can well imagine how boys always wish to become soldiers or sailors.

By-the-by, out of the number of camels that have been lately taken, two very good riding ones were picked out by Mr. Brewster, who also got saddles, and thus, besides our usual donkey-ride, we were enabled to take our first camel-ride to-day. The saddles are different from those I have seen elsewhere, as they cover the whole hump, and are intended only for one person. The seat is square, and has a sort of stick panel before and behind, while the camel is guided by a rope fastened round

his muzzle, and also by a crooked-handled stick that the driver always carries in his hand. The motion is somewhat shaky, as the camel still keeps up the style of the antediluvian animals, moving both feet of one side in the same direction and at the same time. But I should think one would soon get accustomed to it, especially with such good dromedaries as these. Mine was scarred all over, and got therefore the name of the "Map of the Soudan." My daughter's was a much whiter one, but not so good.

At our Christmas dinner we had a large party, and we rejoiced in turkeys from Jedda, a sirloin of beef cut from a cow that had belonged to the rebels, a tinned plum-pudding from England; the eggs used for the custard were from Suez; and lastly, the cake was one Captain Darwell brought from Aden. Was it not a wonderful assortment of things from different countries to get in such a place? Even the champagne had its story; for my husband had ordered it for poor General Hicks, and, owing to some confusion in General Hicks's Egyptian pay, there was no money, so my husband, to prevent delay, bought the wine on his own authority and sent it up to Suakim to be forwarded. The road was, however, blocked, and in the end my husband, being called on to pay, made a search and found the wine just in time for Christmas. Altogether we had a comparatively pleasant day, though, say what you like, a Christmas in England, in spite of rain, wind, storm, and Christmas-boxes, is *Christmas in* England, and passing the day anywhere else leaves

a feeling of want ungratified and a sort of running regret that makes one almost glad when the anniversary is past. We had one pleasure, though, for my husband's son, whom he had not seen for five years, was with us. We have got up our mess thoroughly now, and it consists of the following members :—Our three selves, Messrs. Wylde, Brewster, Bewley, Cameron, Macdonald, Melton Prior, Lieut.-Colonel Harington, Major Giles ; and besides these, the following come in occasionally :—Lieut.-Colonel Morice Bey, Captain Goodall, Mr. Scudamore, Lieut.-Colonel Fitzroy Hay, and Major Harvey. The other day we were comparing notes as to the wanderings during the last few years, of all the people we had seen on that day, and the countries they had come from. They were many and varied. For instance, Mr. Cameron, of the *Standard*, from Afghanistan, Madagascar, and Tonquin; Mr. Macdonald, of the *Daily News*, from the Cape and England; Mr. Melton Prior, of the *Illustrated London News*, from the Cape; Lieut.-Colonel Harington, from Borneo, where he had got up the police; Major Giles, from Afghanistan and India; Lieut.-Colonel Morice Bey and Captain Goodall, from Egypt ; Mr. Scudamore, from Turkey; Lieut.-Colonel Hay and Major Harvey, from the Egyptain war ; my husband, from Turkey, Afghanistan, India, and then Egypt; and my daughter and myself, from France and England. In fact, when we talked it over we found that all, without exception, had for the last five or six years been roaming widely

over the world, and had converged here in an out-of-the-way place like this, and of which a few months ago nobody had heard.

These last days of the year passed in much the same way—drill and musketry practice for my husband and his officers all day long, and donkey-rides and boating for ourselves. The only exception was on the night of Thursday, the 27th, when a rather smart fire was poured into the camp by the enemy from the direction of fort No. 4. Fortunately, their aim was high, and nobody was hit. We, as usual, went on to the housetop, and got much excited on account of seeing the above fort let off several guns, and the booming of cannon tends naturally to make things look serious. Next morning we saw heaps of cartridges from the spot where the enemy had fired, and there were also signs of a large number of camels. Our spies say that Osman Digma, who is close to us at Tamanib, sends out a party every evening after dark. They watch all night, and, if they see an opportunity, come up close and fire away till we get their range, in order to worry more than anything else. Suleiman Pasha has come to the conclusion that he must go himself to Massowah, for the accounts he gets are so confused. Besides, he has just now plenty of time, for the expected troops have not come yet from Cairo, and some weeks must elapse before my husband could drill them sufficiently to march together.

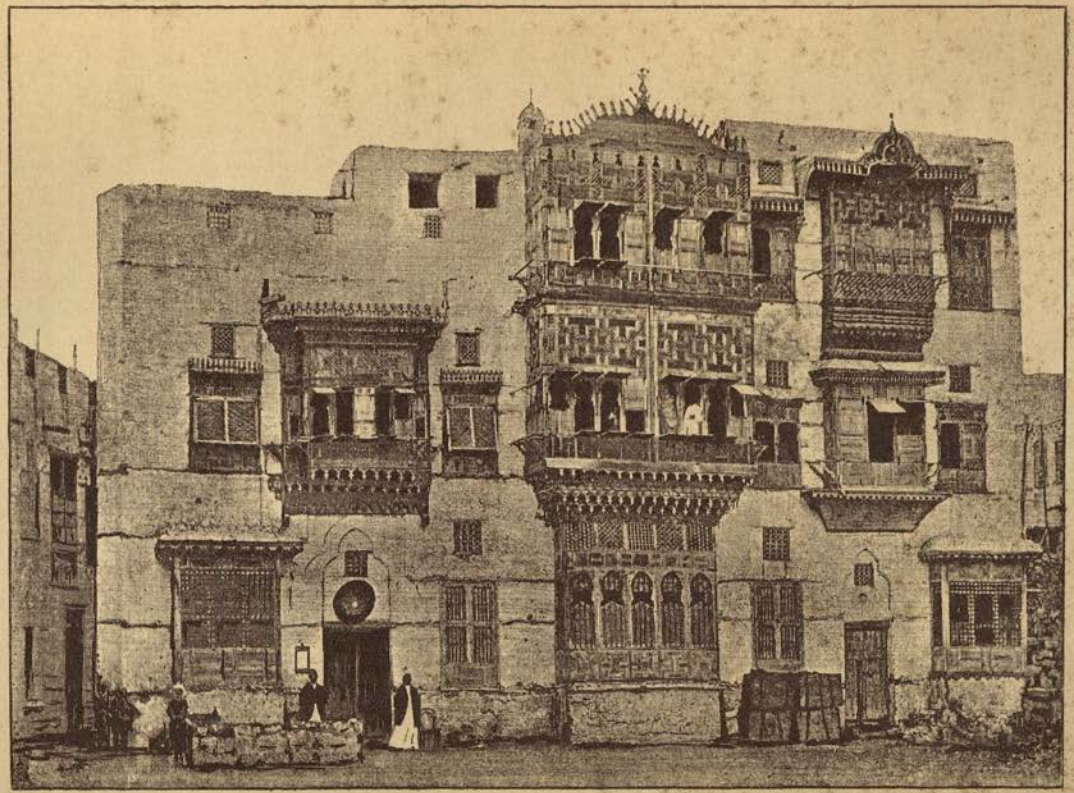
Accordingly, on the 30th of December, early in the morning, General Baker started with Admiral

Hewett in the *Sphinx* for Massowah, where they expected to arrive the next day, while we went on board the *Euryalus* to service, as it was Sunday. After service Captain Hastings, the flag captain, kept us to lunch, and in the afternoon Lieutenant Montresor took our photographs. After that we looked about the ship a bit, and then, happening to talk about signalling with the flags, Captain Hastings asked us if we would like to see it; so I said "Yes," and then gave him a message for Captain Nesham of the *Woodlark*, which was promptly answered by an invitation to afternoon tea there. I am afraid I do not understand any more about signals than before, but it was all done in three or four minutes, by what looked to us to be a multitude of flags, almost as confusing as the semaphore signalling, which is done by a man holding two small flags, and then throwing his hands and arms into every possible position in so rapid a manner that it was almost too quick for us to catch the separate motions. We were much interested, and remained so long that there was only just time to take tea on board the *Woodlark* before we were off again to see the proposed lawn tennis ground. The site chosen gave a clear view all round, so that the enemy could not come on us unawares.

Here we are at the last day of the year, and, detailed trustworthy news having come from all sides, we can well sum up the situation. From Cairo there is no appearance of troops, although on Christmas Day the first regiment of Zebehr Pasha's

Blacks marched past the Khedive. They had had a few days' instruction from General Wood's officers, who show their capabilities by the wonderful way they have got these men on, and thus enable them to keep their ranks, though drilled for so short a time; but then, they have the help of a multitude of non-commissioned officers as drill-instructors, and no fortifications to throw up and guard. From Massowah Mr. Wylde, who was sent up there about a week ago by General Baker, reports no danger from Ras-al-Ullah, and that the latter is some distance away at Adetchai, a place about a hundred miles from the coast. Mr. Wylde also writes that the garrisons in the muderiehs of Massowah and Kassala amount to over 4,000 men, of which 2,500 are good Soudanese troops. As these are all fortified places, they could be easily replaced by Egyptian soldiers, and thus place at our disposal 2,500 fighting troops. These, added to the 1,600 of Zebehr Pasha's Blacks and the 500 Turks, would give 4,600 good men. Besides this, we have 1,500 of the best of the gendarmerie and 400 Egyptian cavalry to do all the camp work, so with these numbers they ought to face all they are likely to meet. Osman Digma remains, as usual, at Tamanib. He has with him Nahadj Hassan, of the *Hadendower*, Mahmoud E. Ameen, of the *Samara*, and Sheikh Esa-ben-Ali. About a week ago Osman had 7,000 men with him, now he has only 4,000, and hopes are entertained that more will fall away. He still declares his intention of fighting the Turks to the last, and then

settling the Shaiab and Noralb tribes, who have as yet not joined him. He sent off two days ago the gun he had captured from the Soudanese, with 500 of the Kameilab tribe, to Tokar, with orders to keep up a continual fire and not allow the garrison to sleep. The rifles he has taken are piled up, to the number of 909, in front of his hut, and beside them are five baskets of ammunition. These baskets are actually wicker-work enclosures, the uprights of which are long straight poles, and it is in such that the grain of the country is kept. The morning our spy was in his camp the *Coquette* sailed for Massowah, and Osman Digma, thinking some movement was intended on Handub, the first station to Tokar, sent forty camel-men to the sea-shore to watch her out of sight. Two thousand men are also at Teb, on the road between Trinkitat and Tokar. When Major Giles's cavalry approached his camp the other day, his scouts gave notice long before, and a general turn-out was ordered to meet the advancing force. The spy also says that the enemy declared they can never fail in their attack on the Egyptians, because, besides divine power making the latter's bullets innocuous, they—the Arabs—have only to wait till the troops have covered themselves with their own smoke, and then they rush without danger into the square. This latter is really a very serious bit of news, as it shows that the Arabs begin to appreciate not only the ridiculous way in which the Egyptians fire, but also are prepared to take advantage of it. We have a pull on them in one way, viz. the blood



GREEK CONSUL'S HOUSE AT SUAKIM.

feuds which must sooner or later break out, and also the great losses that the camel-owning tribes must be beginning to feel, owing to the road to Berber being closed, and their camels consequently not being hired out. The sum thus represented is a very large one in any case, but to them it represents almost fabulous wealth.

The greatest event hitherto has been the arrival to-day of Sheikh Magranee, who, next to the Grand Shereef of Mecca, and the Sheikh ul Islam at Constantinople, is considered by Mussulmans the holiest man going. He claims direct descent from the Prophet, and is certainly a most influential person amongst his co-religionists. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the way he was received at Jedda, for long before the vessel had got *pratique*, Mussulmans of all descriptions, black and white, negro and Arab, rushed up the sides, and were kissing his hands and feet, touching his clothes, and asking his blessing. A great mistake has been committed in his not having been sent before, and there is no doubt that he should have gone up with poor General Hicks when the latter first went to Khartoum. Still, better late than never, and we are very glad to see him even now. I dare say he also is well pleased to stand again on firm ground, as his sea journey from Suez to Jedda was very rough, and coming out from the latter place they had twice to put back before reaching Suakim, during which time he and all the people had been frightfully sea-sick. I wonder whether he thought of the old Arab pro-

verb, "That there is no fool so great as the one who puts only half an inch of wood between himself and death."

Such, then, is the close of the year, and, taking it altogether, though many difficulties have sprung up, and still more are likely to appear, yet there is fair hope of success, especially as the English authorities at Cairo are sure to see that troops come out quickly and are well supplied; for, as they have the fullest information from us, they can appreciate the difficulties we have to contend with, the dangerous position of Tokar, together with the not only dangerous but *desperate* condition of starving Sinkat, whose gallant commander and women and children call for our utmost and instant sympathy. Still, I trust all will come right in the end, for I quite agree with Swain, and think the following a very appropriate farewell quotation under our circumstances:—

"Let to-morrow take care of to-morrow,
Leave things of the future to fate:
What's the use to anticipate sorrow?
Life's troubles come never too late.
If to hope overmuch be an error,
'Tis one that the wise have preferred;
And how often have hearts been in terror
Of evils—that never occurred!"

And with this, we say good-bye to the old year.

CHAPTER X.

SHEIKH MAGRANEE.

NEW YEAR'S VISITS—MY HUSBAND INTERVIEWS SHEIKH MAGRANEE—HIS QUARTERS—RECEPTION OF THE ENGLISH OFFICERS—THE SHEIKH'S SERMON—ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS OFFICIAL RECEPTION—WE GO UP TO CAMP TO SEE IT—DESCRIPTION OF PROCESSION—WOMEN SCREAMING THE "ZAGHAREET"—RECEPTION BY MY HUSBAND OF THE SHEIKH—OLD WOMAN CURED BY TOUCH OF SHEIKH—DINNER GIVEN BY ABDUL RUSSAK—SPEECHES—BAND PLAYS "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN"—FIREWORKS—NEWS FROM KASSALA AND SINKAT—TEWFIK BEY'S LETTER—THE COMPLAINTS OF WANT OF PROVISIONS, COLD, AND THE NUMBER OF THE ENEMY—STORY OF MESSENGER—HIS NARROW ESCAPE—NEWS FROM TOKAR—THE ENEMY SEIZE PART OF THE TOWN, AND PLUNDER THE PRINCIPAL MERCHANT'S HOUSE—ARABS ANXIOUSLY INQUIRE ABOUT NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL—MAJOR GILES—BASHI-BAZOUKS—THEIR WANT OF DISCIPLINE—MR. BEWLEY APPOINTED CHIEF OF TRANSPORT—NUMBER OF CAMELS REQUIRED FOR ARMY—GLANDERS—MAHDI'S INTENTIONS—WRECK OF THE *TANTAH*—MELON-FIELDS—CAMELS EATING THORNS—BOTTLE-BIRDS—NATIVE HUTS IN TOWN—COLONEL OF BASHI-BAZOUKS—OLD PISTOLS—EASTERN AUCTIONS—SALE OF THINGS RECOVERED FROM WRECK OF THE *BURNS*—NATIVES LOOKING ON.

January 1, 1884.—We have had a great crowd this afternoon of well-wishers; even the natives, after calling upon my husband, came over to us afterwards.

My husband went to see Sheikh Magranee at 10 a.m., as the poor little man was too ill to receive him yesterday. He went accompanied by all his staff, in order to receive the Sheikh with all possible honour and ceremony, and thus counteract the reports persistently set going by the rebels, to the effect that the Egyptians, or Turks, as they call them, having called Christians to their help, are all Kaffirs, and that they do not attend to their religion. The Sheikh is quartered in a musjid close to the sea. He came to the door to meet my husband and staff, and seemed really glad to see the English officers. The room inside was the ground floor of the mosque; half of it was carpeted and raised about a couple of feet, and round this part were divans. One of the officers who was there told me about it, and he says it was a curious thing to see the third highest representative of the Mussulman religion sitting down in his own musjid, surrounded by English officers, who were come to help him in keeping up the power of *his* faith. In front and on the carpet knelt or sat, crossed-legged and shoeless, some forty or fifty Egyptian officers, amongst a lot of thick-lipped Soudanese, hairy Arab Sheikhs, and three or four exceedingly dirty, nasty-smelling, half-witted mendicant fools of that class that are so much reverenced by the Mussulmans, owing to the latter's idea that Allah especially protects half-witted people.

Just as the Sheikh had begun to talk to my husband, a poor old man pressed in, and rushed up to the former to touch his clothes, nobody thinking

of stopping him. Amongst Oriental people nothing shows their want of business habits so much as this, for the biggest swell will allow the poorest man to come at any moment into his presence and stop any discussion or work that may be going on. With Mussulmans, the European saying that there is a time for everything sounds absurd. What they say is, "If not to-day, then to-morrow (Bookra) is time enough." Fortunately, there was no other interruption, and Sheikh Magranee went on to say that he hoped everything would now be satisfactorily ended, and that the tribes would see the evil of their ways. My husband then proceeded to compliment the Sheikh on his excellent discourse preached that morning at the Great Mosque, and what a good effect it had already produced on the townspeople. A chorus of Inshallahs echoed from all the natives present, after which, coffee and sherbet being handed round, the interview ended by my husband asking when the Sheikh would return his visit, in order that proper preparations might be made. The time was settled for 4 p.m., so my husband came back to have his breakfast and give the necessary instructions. These were that the *Gafferiah*, which was close to the causeway, should hoist all her flags and fire a salute as soon as the Sheikh started. An escort of cavalry and infantry, together with the band, was sent down to the musjid to accompany him, and the road for half a mile from camp was lined by troops.

We mounted our camels about half-past three,

and came up there with several naval officers who wanted to see the ceremony, one amongst them being the captain of the Italian vessel, the *Rapido*. We dismounted close to the head-quarter tent, and took up our position where we could observe everything. We heard the guns of the *Gafferiah* just as we had arrived, but the Sheikh's progress was so impeded by devotees that it took him fully half an hour to get within sight of us. About the end of that time the head of the procession began to appear, as it passed the police guard, close to the corner of the tents, and turned towards us. The leading men were a motley crowd of the inhabitants of the town, all dressed in their best, then came the band; after them the escort, in brand-new blue cloth uniform; next a crowd of white-robed Sheikhs, carrying the sacred banners, surrounding Sheikh Magranee, who was himself dressed in the Prophet's colour—green. The procession then closed with a long tail of Arabs, Soudanese, Egyptian soldiers, etc. During all this time a great number of women, who had assembled from all parts of the town, kept up that shrill kind of shaking scream called in Arabic "Zaghareet," and which is their sign of great emotion, whether pleasurable or the contrary.

As soon as the Sheikh came in sight the guns of the flagstaff fort began to salute, and they had not finished before he approached near enough to dismount and walk up to my husband, who, with his staff about him, was standing at the door of the reception-tent ready to receive him. The Sheikh,

as he advanced, was supported on either side by Abdul Russak and Izzet Effendi in the way customary in the East, where a great man is supposed to be overweighted by his honours and unable to walk unsupported. After shaking hands, all stopped for a moment while the German photographer, Bode, took a picture of the scene. They then went inside the tent, where the Sheikh was set down in a chair, over which a Cashmere shawl had been thrown. The band then played the Khedivial march, and all were settling down to the usual talk, when a poor woman, who was all doubled up with some disease and extremely dirty, insisted upon seeing the holy Sheikh and being touched by him. As usual, she was admitted, touched his hands, and received his blessing. A moment afterwards, and before leaving the tent, she straightened herself out, declaring she was now cured through the miraculous power of the holy touch. The Mussulmans present looked, or tried to look, highly edified, though it was all probably pre-arranged; still, the Soudanese fanaticism is so great that the poor woman's intense belief may have worked on her mind sufficiently to produce considerable temporary effect.

After she had gone out, the imam or priest of the Turkish regiment entered the tent and made a short speech, finishing up with a "fatah" or Mussulman prayer, on which all the Mussulmans present made the usual responses and stroked their faces, from their foreheads downwards, in the orthodox manner. The plans for the future were shortly discussed,

coffee served, and the Sheikh then retired to a private tent prepared for him. In the evening Colonel Abdul Russak Bey gave a grand dinner to all the officers, European and native, and the principal residents. We were asked also, and were glad to accept, it being something so new for us. We had just time to go home and dress a little before dinner. It was laid out under the tents, and we were astonished to see how well all was done by the Greek contractor, although things must have been so difficult to get. At the table I was at was the French consul, M. Lemay, the English consul, Mr. Baker, Colonel A. Russak, Colonel Harington, my husband, and several others. The band of the gendarmerie played during dinner, and when the time came for proposing healths, the first was of course the Khedive's, to which the Khedivial hymn was played; next was the Queen's, with "God save the Queen." After this every toast got our national air, even when Sheikh Magranee's health was drunk. The Egyptians have a great idea of this custom, and like the excuse it gives for unlimited libation. When the speechifying was over, we went out to watch a few fireworks that had been got up impromptu; after which, being thoroughly tired with our long day, my daughter and myself, escorted by several of the party, returned to the house, leaving my husband in his quarters at the flag-staff fort. This time he had the pull of us; usually it is he who comes down to dinner, and has to leave directly afterwards.

On the 2nd of January a telegram was brought to

MESSADAGLIA BEY. ABDUL RASSAK. SARTORIUS PASHA.

IZZET EFFENDI.

In back ground
Major MULETTA
Captain WALKER.
Captain GOODALL.
Col. HARINGTON.
Under
Major MULETTA'S
left shoulder is
Major PALISKA.
(afterwards killed.)

LT.-COL. KAMAL BEY. SHEIKH MAGHRANEE. YUSUF BEY.

SHEIKH MAGHRANEE AND EGYPTIAN OFFICERS.

my husband. It was despatched by the Governor of Kassala to Massowah, and came thence by postal steamer. In it the governor said that all the tribes about him were perfectly quiet, that the Sheikhs were on good terms with him, and that he had plenty of soldiers, and was drilling them daily.

Almost at the same time the following letter was brought in from Sinkat. It was addressed to my husband, and in it Tewfik Bey complains of want of provisions, and the cold, for Sinkat is 4,000 feet above the sea-level.

"EXCELLENCE,

"Je suis aujourd'hui le plus heureux du monde d'avoir reçu la lettre de V. E. Je vous félicité de votre nomination en qualité de Chef d'État Major de S. E. le Général Baker Pacha, nomination qui, sans aucune doute, nous est très-utile. Je vous remercie E. de toute la bonté que vous avez avec moi. Le seul moyen de faire venir des vivres, qui seraient composés de maïs, biscuit, riz, oignon, beurre, et de sel, c'est de l'amener avec la force qui arrivera déliverer Sinkat, force qui devrait être assez grande. La nourriture nous suffira jusqu'au 20 janvier et même au 23 à raison de 150 drachmes de maïs et cent de biscuit le jour pour chaque soldat, toute autre espêce nous manque, même le sel. Il y a plusieurs routes entre Suakim et Sinkat, la plus favourable entre elles est celle de Hadassana, quoiqu'elle est la plus longue mais elle est la plus large à l'exception d'un petit endroit; on trouve dans quel-

ques endroits de grands plantes nommés, Arak, où on doit faire beaucoup d'attention de peur que l'ennemi s'y cachera. Depuis un mois et demi l'ennemi arrive sur les montagnes qui entourent la fortresse et tire sur nous avec des fusils, avec cent soldats; je les ai chassé cinq fois à une distance assez, longue le nombre n'était pas plus de 400, adjourd'hui il est augmenté enormément; hier l'ennemi est approché des montagnes en grand nombre, il a été chassé tout de suite par le bal des canons; un soldat de Bashi-Bazouks est blessé dans le jambe gauche, c'est la première fois. Je vous assure E. que je ne puis pas vous dire le nombre d'ennemis qui nous entoure le fort. 1° de manque d'espion, 2° avec la petite force de Sinkat que je ne peu plus sortir de la place découvrir le nombre d'ennemi.

"Je pourrai vous dire E. que d'après mes idées et mes pensées que le nombre d'ennemi s'elevé aujourd'hui à peu près à 5 ou 6 mille. Tous les soldats sont en bonne santé excepté quelques-uns qui sont devenus faible à cause de peu de nourriture et du froid qui règne à Sinkat. J'espère, Excellence, d'avoir bientôt l'honneur de vous voir à Sinkat en bonne santé. Je vous prie, Excellence, d'accepter l'assurance de mon plus profond respect.

"Votre tout dévoué,

"M. TEWFIK,

"Gouverneur de Sinkat."

The messenger seems to have had a nasty time of it. He started from here with his brother, and

reached the rebel lines safely, but found the watch there was too good for them, as, in trying to sneak through, they were seized and brought before Ibrahim Mahmoud, a Sheikh of the Haddendowas, who gave orders to kill them. They naturally remonstrated, declaring that they were messengers from Mahmoud Aly, and that their mission was to tell Tewfik Bey that he, Mahmoud Aly, was going to join the rebels, and that he advised Tewfik Bey to do so too. Being asked for the letter, they were sharp enough to answer at once, that all knew that Mahmoud Aly could not write, and that, being in a Government place like Suakim, he was afraid to employ an outsider to do so; besides, said the spy, "you can keep my brother as a surety till I come back and give you Tewfik's answer." This was agreed to, and accordingly the messenger went off to the entrenchments, and, seeing Tewfik, called out to him. The latter recognized the spy's voice, and was much pleased with General Baker's letter. The spy then told him the difficulty he was in, and got Tewfik to write a sham letter to Ibrahim Mahmoud, offering to give in, etc., etc., but intimating doubts as to his good faith. He therefore required him to send in a camel and twenty sheep, as a proof that he really meant what he had said. Sheikh Ibrahim was nearly doing so, but, unfortunately, some of his followers objected, so the matter was referred to Osman Digma. Still, one point was gained—both spies were released, and came back to Suakim.

From Tokar yesterday's news is that the soldiers are in good health, and had all sworn on the Koran to defend themselves to the last, but they were in great want of ammunition. The enemy attacked them day and night, and left them no rest. On the 20th of December the enemy, coming in force, had seized part of the town outside the lines; the next morning they were driven away, but in the meanwhile had sacked the house of the principal merchant, a man called Khrames. They beat and had seized his concubine and daughter, the former till she had disclosed where he had put his money. The troops lost five men killed and five men wounded in this affair. Verbal reports about the roads and country say there is a great quantity of cattle in all directions, attracted, no doubt, by the splendid crop of grass that has sprung up this year, owing to the unusually good rains that have fallen. The Arabs have exhibited great interest in asking who is the new governor-general (Suleiman Pasha having just been sent away); whether he is Egyptian or Christian; or, if the latter, is he likely to remain after the war is over?—many of these tribes appearing to be tired of the war, but are afraid of coming in, as they say that, in spite of all promises, an Egyptian governor would make them smart when once he had got them in his power. They are greatly astonished at payments being made so promptly, and are very impatient at not getting their share of the high prices now ruling. I wonder what will be the upshot

of all this? The above news has given us a good deal to think of, and I really believe that if we soon get a good show of force here, Skeikh Magranee's letters will have great effect, and everything may quiet down. The whole thing really lies with Cairo now, and it is such a pity that the telegraph line has not been laid as originally intended. They say, though I can hardly believe it, that the English Government interfered in this, to us, most momentous question, on account of some commercial reason, and so caused the delay.

The officers of the *Euryalus* are most energetic, and have got up a capital lawn tennis ground; they are even suggesting a cricket-match, the army against the navy. If it comes off, it will be the first that Suakim has ever seen. We had a long and pleasant ride on our camels this afternoon, and went a good way beyond the water-forts. My husband was in a state of mind till our return, for while we were out he got news that a considerable body of the enemy had come in our direction, and might be hiding about the bush; and, indeed, though we laughed it off at the time, it was not at all an impossible thing to have happened, for the mimosa bush grows so high and thick that hundreds of people might be within a few yards of us without our knowing. Before going home we went to see them playing lawn tennis; one or two Egyptian officers were also there, but they evidently understood nothing about it. We could not stay long, as we had some distance to go before we could get into the gates, so

had our tea, mounted our camels, and trotted off. We met a lot of Major Giles's Bashi-Bazouks, taking their horses to water, and showing how little discipline they yet had, by wildly careering about the place, and racing with each other. The naval officers with us could not help remarking how unreliable such men must be. I hope and trust they are mistaken.

Mr. Bewley has been regularly appointed chief of the transport. He is very anxious about it, as he insists that we want 1,200 camels, at least, while we have actually only 200. My husband says this estimate of Mr. Bewley's is not great, as in Afghanistan transport was calculated to come to as near as possible a camel a man. The troops we expect to have will be 5,000, and therefore one camel to every four men is a very low estimate. But then, Egyptian troops have the advantage of wanting very little. They can carry twelve large soldiers' biscuits with them and call it four days' provisions, for they get absolutely nothing else. Their hospital requirements are equally small; and then, again, all would have to bivouac, so no tents hardly would be necessary. Glanders has broken out amongst the horses to-day, and several have therefore been shot. We hope that these strong measures will have stopped so dangerous a disease. General Baker is expected back to-morrow, and we are all anxiously looking out for his news. The reports from Osman Digma still point out to a decline in his power. He wanted,

it appears, to kill Zebehr Pasha's nephew, but was not allowed to do so. The most important event with him is the receipt of letters from the Mahdi, brought down by messengers from Khartoum, in which the Mahdi declares his intention to seize all Central Africa, march down on Egypt, cross over and seize Mecca, then the whole Turkistan empire, afterwards all the world.

Day by day, as in the story of "Blue Beard," we turn our eyes towards the horizon, hoping to see the steamers carrying the troops so much wanted. But nothing appears, and we cannot imagine what is the cause of delay, for the English authorities at Cairo must be fully aware of our situation and that of the beleaguered garrisons.

We have just got a letter from my step-son, who left at the same time as Suleiman Pasha in the *Mahallah*. He says that just as they had gone out of the harbour they met a boat coming from the *Tantah*, which vessel had got itself on to a rock, "More Egyptian Postal Company." Instead of letting the boat go on to give notice, and so get proper help, for several English vessels were at Suakim at the time, the captain of the *Mahallah* took her up and steamed down to the *Tantah*. He found there a little paddle-wheel condenser, the *Deb-el-Bar*, that had been helplessly looking on at the *Tantah* for four days. The *Mahallah* stayed there two more days, took off a great part of the men, who were Bashi-Bazouks destined for Suakim, but never attempted to do anything else, not even to save the

mail, although the weather for the first twenty-four hours was beautifully calm. On the second day of the *Mahallah's* stopping there, a half gale arose, and the *Tantah* slipped off the coral reef into eighty fathoms of water. The mails, with all our Christmas letters, a lot of transport animals, and a quantity of ammunitions of war, were lost. Some geese and turkeys, which the English engineer quietly took off in his boat, were the only things saved. All this happened within fifty or sixty miles of Suakim. Those "who know" here say the only thing that will astonish them will be if any notice whatever is taken of the affair.

We have been buying a lot of photographs this morning from two German photographers who happen to be living here. They do not seem to have been doing much business hitherto, but they have lots of work now. The name of the principal man is Bode, and he is the son of a clergyman in some out-of-the-way place in Prussia. All the Suakim photos in the book are by him. Unfortunately, he does not understand working up a negative, and without that no print can be very good.

During our camel-ride to-day we came across large tracts of melon-fields; the melons seem to thrive in the most arid soil, and to get their moisture more from the dew than anything else. They are certainly never watered. Besides these, there does not appear to be any other cultivation about Suakim, except about an acre of vegetables close to the big water-tank. There are a few pretty wild flowers, especially

a convolvulus of the brightest blue, and some yellow flowers something of the foxglove genus. There are also no end of the colocynth, looking like the most delicious little melons, but the taste is not like the look, and quite fits them for the nastiest pills. During the time we were examining the different flowers, our camels began to graze on the prickly bushes about. What they liked most was the camel thorn, which is very abundant here. It is a small, rather thorny bush, known in India as "jowassa." If they do not get this, they seem to enjoy the mimosa equally well, in spite of its two or three inch thorns, which will easily pierce a man's thickest boot. It is astonishing to see the camels eat this. They take it into their mouths and chew it with a mild satisfaction, the sight of which would enable Mark Twain to add half a dozen extra chapters to his books of travel. We came across, in our meanderings, a small tree, from the branches of which were hanging a number of bottle-bird's nests. Their shape is like an elongated egg, very sharp at the small end, rather bulging out at the other end, while the opening is at the side. The bird is something like a sparrow, with a considerable touch of the yellow of a canary. We brought some of the nests home, intending to keep them.

By this time the shadows were lengthening so much that we were obliged to move in order to get back before dark. As we passed the lines we noticed a quantity of old and good thorns being piled outside the ditch, and at the same time a group of natives

of the town objecting strongly. It turned out that orders had been given to take all the hedges from round the native huts, and give them new mimosa instead, as the new mimosa was equally good for them, while the old, intensely prickly, was invaluable to us for the defences. The owners of the same did not believe in these promises, hence these tears; but when some bush was brought in and given over, they got more contented. Their huts were mostly outside the town, and were built in exactly the same way as the tents of the Bedouins, only instead of black blankets or skins matting was used; instead of string, skewers of wood to pin the mats together. The supports were bent poles, as with Bedouin tents. Round each tent or matted hut was a hedge of thorn, intended to keep out intruders, and to hide the women within.

We went on to the roof of my husband's quarters on the flag-staff fort on our way back, and found the colonel of the Bashi-Bazouks there. He is a fine-looking old man of about sixty. His dress was very handsome, and consisted of a beautifully embroidered jacket and waistcoat *à la Zouave*, very loose dark cloth trousers, embroidered leggings, and Turkish shoes. He had a splendid red silk sash, twisted in several folds, through the right side of which was thrust a curved scimitar; while more in front were two silver-mounted, old-fashioned pistols, secured in the same way. Over the sash was a band, tightly buckled on, which supported three or four filagree silver boxes, intended to hold powder, shot, and the

small necessaries belonging to the pistols. Directly I saw the latter, it struck me what a splendid set they would make for a fancy ball, and as luck would have it, a few days afterwards this very colonel came to my husband about some arms belonging to the men that had been killed in the first affair near Suakim, and which he wished to sell. It appears that amongst the killed was a Bashi-Bazouk major of an old Albanian family, who owned a magnificent pair of jewelled pistols. No arms could be sold without permission, and therefore the colonel had come to ask it, and show what he wanted to sell. I was very much taken with them, for they had every mark of antiquity, as not only had they flint-locks, but also bore anterior traces of having been matchlocks, and this would send back the date of their construction a very long way. According to regulations, everything belonging to a deceased soldier has to be sold by auction, and so my husband, while giving the desired permission for the sale, commissioned a man to outbid any offers that were made; thus we got them, and I intend to keep them as a souvenir of Suakim.

Eastern street auctions are always worth going to. The excitement of the would-be purchasers, and the gesticulations of the auctioneer, lend a life to the business which is rarely seen in Europe. The most curious of all, though, is the auction of live animals, especially a valuable horse. The auctioneer, taking the horse, goes through the streets, shouting "Haraj, haraj," that is, "Auction, auction." Every now and

then a man stops him, looks at the horse, and makes a bid; the auctioneer then continues his shouting, adding the amount of the highest offer up to that moment. Suddenly out rushes a man from his shop, shouts out a bid, and bolts back to his customers, whom he has left without the slightest warning. In one case it was a barber, who left his customer reclining in a chair with his face covered with lather. Another time the bid came from a man who had just finished his prayer in the most hurried manner, evidently having heard the voice of the auctioneer as the latter was coming up the street. Sometimes a bidder would shout out from the housetop; then a woman, with her face well covered up, would open the lattice an inch or two and make a bid. Thus shouting, disputing, praising his horse, and altogether making a great row, the auctioneer continues his rounds usually till the gun or the *muezzin* announces the time for evening prayer. This is equivalent to the auctioneer's hammer, and the highest bidder up to this time gets the horse.

There has also been an auction at the Custom-house, of some very handsome Persian pottery that was saved from the wreck of the *Burns*. The vessel was a British India steamer that had come almost direct from Persia, and was to have called at Suakim on her way to England. Unfortunately, she ran on to some of the coral reefs a few miles out of the harbour, and became a hopeless wreck. Her general cargo was wool, and the pottery and other curiosities

were said to have belonged to a Frenchman, who died in Persia, and who, from his long residence there, had known how to collect articles of real value. I do not understand why these things were not sent on, after all; but I was told that, the vessel having been entirely given up by her owners, everything was being sold for the benefit of the underwriters. Several English vessels being in harbour, the above pottery went at what appeared to me to be fancy prices. Amongst it were some blue tiles of that peculiar hue like those seen on the great musjid at Lahore, and the colouring of which is supposed to have been a secret brought from Persia many centuries ago, and now quite lost. Besides the above, the most noticeable articles were some old Damascened pistols and very quaint brasswork lamps. There were also a few carpets originally of considerable value, but these the salt water had quite spoilt. Although the bidders were nearly all English, yet the crowd round about was made up of every possible person that could get into the Custom-house yard. A little Jew called Levi was the only outside bidder; he certainly made up for the rest, for he bought half the stock exposed for sale, having probably a good appreciation of the price they would fetch elsewhere. As to the rest of the crowd, they no doubt thought the Feringees had gone mad when they wanted to buy such old and broken rubbish. But while they looked on at our proceedings, we were remarking them and observing how easy it was to pick out the Egyptians, on account of their

invariably having some defect in their eyes. The Arabs of the desert are almost free of this; why, I do not know, for dirt seems even on both sides, except that the Arabs use more mutton fat, and therefore stink greatly at times.

CHAPTER XI.

ZEREBAS.

GENERAL BAKER RETURNS FROM MASSOWAH—COMPLAINTS OF ABYSSINIAN GOVERNMENT—RAS-UL-RIAH, THE HEAD OF THE BANDITS—ROUTE FROM MASSOWAH TO KHARTOUM—ITS ADVANTAGES FOR AN ADVANCING ARMY—ESCORT OF EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS PRACTISING "HOWLING DERVISHES"—HAND-CHARGES—CRICKET-MATCH AND SPORTS—ATTACK BY THE ENEMY—GENERAL BAKER GOES TO EXAMINE TRINKITAT—MAKING A ZEREBA—NO TROOPS COMING—ARAB TRIBES—ZEBEHR PASHA'S MEN AT LAST—COLONEL FRED. BURNABY—GENERAL BAKER'S RECONNAISSANCE—FALSE REPORTS OF DEFEAT—MY HUSBAND MARCHES OUT—MEETS GENERAL BAKER—THE CADI DESERTS TO THE ENEMY, LEAVING A LETTER BEHIND—DINNER TO MY HUSBAND AT FOREIGN OFFICERS' MESS—CHORUS BY ITALIANS—DANCE BY ALBANIANS—OUR CAMELS STOLEN—CORAL REEFS—MY HUSBAND IS ATTACKED IN ZEREBA—EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS OBJECT TO STOPPING OUT ALL NIGHT—BEHAVIOUR OF DOCTOR OF THE TURKISH BATTALION—THE ENCHANTED CAMEL.

GENERAL BAKER came back on the 5th of January from Massowah, and has brought very favourable impressions from there. He appears to think that the troubles between the Abyssinians and the Egyptians could easily be settled if the English Government would only send a commissioner. For the principal complaints made are about the debatable land of Bogos, which Ismail Pasha claims to

have annexed in 1870, but which the Abyssinians deny; the free passage and proper protection of merchandise to the sea, instead of its being plundered while in transit, as is now done; and lastly, the giving up of a renegade Abyssinian, Ras-ul-Riah, who, although head of all this looting, is protected by the Egyptians here, and is, I believe, actually on his way to Cairo. Unfortunately for him, he has as yet only got as far as Suakim, and General Baker has ordered him to be made a close prisoner. The difficulty with him is that, if tried, found guilty, and condemned by an Egyptian tribunal, his close relationship to King John might make the latter disinclined to allow him to be punished by the Egyptian Government. Then, on the other side, if we gave him up to King John, the history of the prisoners of Magdala, about whom we engaged in the Abyssinian war, have made us aware that not much mercy is to be expected. Anyhow, for the present he is a prisoner in the police barrack, next to the flagstaff fort, and amuses himself by drinking as nearly as possible two bottles of brandy a day. But a new route to Khartoum is the important point, brought into shape by General Baker's visit to Massowah. It would go by Massowah, Sunheit, Kassala, Abu-Heraz, and on to the Blue Nile, near Senaar, then down by river to Khartoum. My husband was discussing the advantages when we were on board the steamer coming from Suez, and they are, first, that, with Abyssinia friendly, the left flank of an advancing army would be absolutely safe

as far as Kassala, while water in plenty is to be found along the whole road. Again, the army would go on increasing in strength as it got further on, for several fortified towns and posts would have to be passed, whose garrisons, good Soudanese troops, would be exchanged by Egyptians and then incorporated into the army; thus the troops eventually emerging at Kassala would number at least 8,000 men, well armed and equipped. Nor should it be lost sight of that Kassala itself stands on a comparatively elevated plateau, from which easy roads lead down to the homes of the tribes in revolt. Once there, with plenty of water and provisions, the left flank comparatively secure, in a position threatening the homes of the enemy, the moral effect alone would be very great, and even if no further advance were made, the retreat of the garrison at Khartoum would be greatly facilitated, as the road between this and Senaar goes through a country whose inhabitants, the Shukerie Arabs, are not particularly unfriendly, while from there, by river, the possession of armed steamers makes the passage quite safe for us. The objection is the length, as, even after having reached Kassala, the distance to Abu-Heraz on the Blue Nile *viâ* Tomat and Suk-Abu-Sin is just two hundred miles. Still, the probable safety, and therefore feasibility, of this route overweighs all defects as to distance. Besides, the Berber route is quite impassable for large bodies of men, even if we leave the enemy out of the calculation.

The Shaiab and Fadilab tribes the other day sent in a large number of their representatives, and this morning they rushed past the house on their way to Sheikh Magranee at such a pace that they had to lean right back on their camels. Bode, the photographer, took a good picture of them. The old grey-bearded chief, with his young son sitting behind him, comes out very well. So do the amulets each has tied on just above the elbow. By-the-by, the young man has his hair done up in ringlets, while his father sticks to the old style, so perhaps the ringlets are a new masher fashion of the Arab tribes. In the old man's hands are the driving-stick and the guiding-ropes of the camel. The younger has the usual spear. It has been determined that they are to relieve Sinkat, as they have promised to do so on consideration of a large bribe.

Later in the day Sheikh Magranee called on the governor. There was a guard of honour assembled there to receive him, and a most ludicrous scene ensued; for while he was inside, the guard, brought up to the wildest pitch of excitement at seeing so holy a man, opened out their ranks, faced each other, and, taking time from their officer, began to go through the ceremony that strangers who visit Cairo know so well as that of the howling dervishes. The officer was a little bandy-legged man, and his being in full uniform anything but added to his dignity when he began to rock himself backwards and forwards and yell "Allah! Allah!" louder and louder. The men, with their arms in one hand, copying him, made the

SHAIAB TRIBE AND SHEIKH.

whole thing the height of absurdity. We saw all this from a boat, the crowd being too great round the Government-house. I do not think the Arabs were impressed any more than we were; indeed, they appear to have a hearty contempt for all things Egyptian. They thought much more of some hand-charges that Lieutenant Montresor showed them on the big parade ground. One of the principal Sheikhs, a fine, tall man called Moosa Adam (Moses Adam), had been to see our holy man, and it was thought advisable to impress him a little with our power: accordingly he was taken out to the parade ground, and the hand-charge burst in front of him. This hand-charge is a tin canister containing four pounds of gun-cotton, to which one end of a long instantaneous fuse is attached, the other end being fixed into the muzzle of a small pistol. When required to be used, the canister is thrown amongst the enemy, and exploded at will by firing off the pistol. Anything then within a radius of eight yards is blown to pieces. After this the Sheikh, seeing a horse close by, begged for a mount in order to show off his riding, which was not much, as all he did was to gallop furiously up and down for about two or three hundred yards, and nearly tumble off. Still, he was much pleased with himself, and it amused us.

On Monday, the 7th, we had a cricket-match, and two or three days after a regular day of sports. Our eleven were formed of my husband, Colonel Hay, Colonel Harington, Lieutenants Maxwell and Barton, Major Giles, Mr. Bewley, Captain Goodall, Major

Tahir Bey, of the Turkish infantry, and others, whose names I forget. The navy were represented by Lieutenants Paris, Lindsay, Montresor, Gubbins, etc. The latter got the best of it, for we had, as Colonel Harington says, an awful "tail," which, I believe, means in cricket parlance that our makeshifts were very bad. In the sports, though, we took our revenge, for in the tug-of-war the officers of the army got up a team of ten whose average weight was fourteen stone—our sheet-anchor, as the jealous navy officers called him, being the camp quarter-master, Malcozi, who weighed fully twenty stone. We all enjoyed the sports very much, the running in sacks, pick-a-back, or wheelbarrows being specially approved of by the native spectators. The tug-of-war amongst the native troops was won by the Turks, who got so furiously excited at it that it was almost a relief when it was over. It is wonderful how small an idea even the native officers have of fair play, for it was with the greatest difficulty that the English officials could prevent men giving a sly tug at the rope whenever they thought they would not be found out. This caused much delay, as the men had several times to pull twice over. One other event was worth noticing, viz. the splendid performance of Lieutenant Caulfield, of the *Euryalus;* he would have carried off the palm in any gymnastic contest, and here, of course, he was *facile princeps*. As a last wind-up there was a little tent-pegging, but as my husband and Lieutenant Carrol were the only ones who could do anything, it was soon over.

Excepting drill, which is never-ceasing, there has not been much to note for the last few days, except that the enemy have been several times firing into us. But this evening, the 10th of January, we have had rather a bigger scare than usual. We had had some people to dine with us, and, after having played cards until we were tired, went out for a row, when suddenly our attention was attracted by a flash of light and a rumbling sound, which by that time we well knew was the sound of cannon in the direction of the water-forts. Then, looking there, we saw several flashes from rifles, and presently a bullet whizzed very close to us. This made us anxious to have a closer look, but the gentlemen of our party insisted upon our going back, and we only walked up as far as the causeway to find out the news. There was, however, nobody there but the Egyptian guard, so we returned to our regular station, the housetop; but by that time it was all over, and shortly afterwards Captain Goodall, my husband's aide-de-camp, came down with a message that the enemy had retired. The reason the enemy keeps so far out is that General Baker has made a series of small fortified posts all round, and the rebels do not quite like getting inside.

General Baker has gone with Admiral Hewett in the *Sphinx* to take a look at Trinkitat. He sent the *Tor* beforehand, and told the captain that he was to anchor in the harbour there; but as the enemy fired a shot or two at him, he promptly removed himself, and General Baker found him a long way out of his

proper place. A very good spot for landing has been determined upon. It is an island separated from the mainland by a marsh a mile long, and which in parts is covered by a few inches of water. This will be a nuisance when a march inland is attempted, but it greatly adds to the safety during the operation of landing. As far as the telescope shows, the country is very clear and good for cavalry, and having ascertained this the general returned.

General Baker took out all the troops to-day for a couple of miles into the bush, in order to practice the formation of a zereba—zereba meaning thorn hedge in Arabic. It is the kind of defence troops in this country always throw up at night or during a long halt. General Baker's plan is to make it with a sort of little triangle shooting out from the centre of each side, and thus enable the men in those triangles to fire along the sides. It would, of course, be no defence against musketry, but, as the thickness of the thorn hedge is six or seven feet, it is perfect against those whose only arms are swords and spears. About 3 o'clock all came back, and the first question, as usual, asked was—"Has a troopship come in?" Few people outside can imagine how disgusted we are. The so-called friendly tribes are beginning to get a little shy when they see no reinforcements coming, and it is a question of the most vital importance just now to keep them faithful in their engagement to relieve Sinkat. Friday, the 11th, being as usual a Mussulman holiday, my husband was enabled to accompany us to see some

of the tribes coming in, and also the Egyptian troops performing *á la* howling dervish. They were assembled in circles of forty or fifty, shaking, bowing, howling, going up and down on tiptoe, and making as big fools of themselves as they could. It was a pleasure to turn back and look at a number of one of these tribes coming in; they, indeed, looked fit to fight. One cannot help admiring their strong active figures, with their pleasant countenances, though they are savages.

At last a steamer has arrived with part of Zebehr Pasha's Soudanese. Better late than never, is all that we can say. It has, however, brought us disastrous news, namely, that the English Government have determined that Egypt shall give up the whole of the Soudan. If they had only kept the news to themselves for a time it would not have been so bad, but we are all in despair as to the probable effects the publicity of the same will cause on the friendly tribes who have started for Sinkat, and are to be there on the 25th. Hitherto we have felt pretty certain, the inducements held out to them being so great; but now we doubt exceedingly. Still, we were very glad to receive a quantity of home letters, all expressing sympathy for the *dreadful* danger they think we are in. Colonel Fred. Burnaby was also on board; he had been unwell lately, and was travelling about for a change, so he came to take a look at Suakim.

On the 22nd of January we had a day of great excitement and anxiety, for General Baker took the

cavalry out to reconnoitre in the direction of Osman Digma's camp. He was only to go out a few miles, and be back by 1 p.m.; instead of which it was 3 p.m. before anything was heard of his party, and then only through a native officer, who came in wildly galloping, in a state of most abject fear. He said that the general had been attacked, surrounded and cut to pieces. The news put us in a state of great agitation, for though we did not believe the whole of the report, yet we could hardly doubt but that some considerable disaster had befallen the reconnoitering party. We rushed up to the top of the house, and got more anxious still on seeing with a good telescope more men hurrying in on horseback, and here and there a few riderless horses. Then we heard the bugles sounding the assembly, my husband having already got the news. There was an immediate stir in the camp, and the troops began marching out from all sides. We saw my husband forming up the troops, sending out scouts, Mr. Brewster being one of them; then a few officers and orderlies tore about in all directions, to get, as I afterwards found out, extra ammunition and water, and to give notice to Dr. Leslie and his ambulance to be in readiness. This was all intensely absorbing, but when I saw my husband actually going, my heart leapt into my mouth, and we both felt as if the awfulness of war had really come home to us; the glamour of excitement passed, and we had a good cry. In the meanwhile, the troops having been formed up, they marched off within twenty

minutes of the time the first news was brought in.

We were dreadfully excited and nervous, and could hardly hold our telescopes steady, as we expected that the enemy would appear at any moment, flushed with a first success, and rush on to the onset right before our eyes. It would not have been so bad if we ourselves could have been in it, but what neither of us could bear was to see my husband actually go out.

In the midst of all this we suddenly saw the troops halt, and then stand at ease. We were delighted, for it proved to us that the news brought in by the runaway cavalry was false, as, if General Baker had met with a hopeless disaster, and the enemy had been coming on in force, the troops would not have waited thus, standing at ease. From what we afterwards heard, the false alarm originated with a number of Major Giles's cavalry who had bolted, and had invented all these lies on the spur of the moment in order to excuse themselves. It appears that General Baker had gone out further than he had at first intended, and that when within a couple of miles of Osman Digma's camp, he came across a lot of rebels' cattle; these he promptly seized. The owners, getting news, sent a number of camel-men to try and recover them, and so General Baker with his 300 cavalry quietly retired, keeping the enemy sufficiently back to enable the cattle to be driven in. It was when the word was given to retire at a walk that part of the Turks, who were on

the flank, took fright and flight at the same time. We lost four men, and the enemy several more.

These little expeditions are meant to keep up the spirits of the troops, and to accustom them to the enemy. I hope it may, for it will be needed, as the friendly tribes are more doubtful than ever. Suleiman Pasha's favourite, Cadi, has gone over to Osman Digma, leaving a letter behind him, in which he says, and I think quite rightly, that, as the Government have determined to give up the Soudan, and as his family and himself are inhabitants of the country, they cannot go away, and therefore would be the first, in such an eventuality, to feel the revenge of the rebels, he cannot but try to make his peace with them. He also says that the news coming publicly in the newspapers proves that the Soudan is certain to be abandoned, but that should the Egyptian Government, after all, elect to remain, he would return and serve them faithfully, as he had hitherto done.

Last evening my husband dined at a mess got up by a lot of the foreign officers in the barrack occupied by the police. Amongst them were Colonel Messadaglia Bey, Major Maletta, Captains Rucca and Manheim, Major Yusef Bey, Lieutenants Carrol, Cavaliere, and Malcozi, Captain Walker, Major Paliocca, Mr. Cantel, etc., etc. Toasts in French, Italian, and German were proposed, to which my husband answered in the language the toast was proposed in, making in each case a short speech, much to the delight of all the foreigners,

who afterwards told me about it. After dinner, a chorus by the Italian police, led by Messadaglia Bey, was sung splendidly. Then, to wind up, a bonfire was lit, and the Albanians assembled to perform their national dance. This consists of a number of men standing hand-in-hand in a semicircle, the leader holds a handkerchief with which he waves the signal for a gradually increasing speed or a higher series of jumps, for the dancing amounts only to two or three steps, a jump, and then a step sideway, thus gradually moving round in a circle. The dance is guided in time by a monotonous chaunt sung by the performers, the words of which consisted of some short sentence improvised at the moment by the leader. Captain Goodall told me that the words in this present instance were praises of General Baker and my husband, and saying, "We will show what the Albanians can do."

We had rather a slow afternoon to-day, as our camels were stolen yesterday. It is a great nuisance, as such good riding ones are not easily found. We have also to take more care as to the distance we go outside the lines, for the spies constantly bring in news of the enemy being close at hand. This afternoon, for a change, we went fishing, and also to examine the coral reefs. As to the first, we caught nothing, not having enough patience; and as to the latter, we were very much disappointed, for they are simply a most solid and very thick wall, rather rough, rising from great depths to within a foot of the surface. There is nothing pretty about them—none

of that feathery, light-looking stuff which in our ideas we usually associate with the name of coral. The real interest lies in the fact that so small a worm can build up such stupendous works that quite exceed the power of man in spite of all the help of machinery, for the work of the coral-worm bids defiance to the utmost strength of the ocean, while nothing raised by man has ever succeeded in doing so. The outing was very agreeable, and we came in with a capital appetite. My husband has left us, as he has gone out to-day with some infantry to build a zereba, and to remain there a couple of days, by way of another little exercise for the troops.

We were, of course, a little put out by this, and were not quite quiet till relieved by Captain Goodall coming in next day and telling us my husband was all right; that the zereba had been attacked last night, but that the rebels found the troops on the alert, and probably lost several men, for they left a quantity of shields and spears about, also one camel. Besides this there were many traces of blood. Mr. Scudamore, the *Times'* correspondent, was in the zereba, and came in with Mr. Goodall to give us the news, and to get some provisions. They say that the rebels who attacked the zereba were most likely a party that were going on to Suakim, and stumbled across it by chance, and this accounts for their coming so close.

General Baker went with my husband yesterday, and looked on while the zereba was being formed. On its completion, he was just preparing to return

to Suakim, when several Egyptian officers went up to him and actually had the cheek to tell him that their men, the Egyptian regiments, would not sleep out of camp. General Baker, in his usual quiet way, and between the puffs of his cigarette, said, "Then, any man or officer who leaves the zereba and comes into Suakim without order, will be shot within ten minutes of his arrival. I shall not try him by court-martial; he will simply be shot." Nobody went away, but the mere fact of their daring to avow such cowardice bodes ill for the future. Of course the Turks had nothing to do with this, though their Arab doctor annoyed the English officers by the intensity of his fear. From dark up to 9 p.m. he kept looking over the zereba, trying to see into the darkness, his fears turning every bush into camels and men; the longer he looked the more he saw, until at last he was so overcome that he would only move from place to place on all fours, and with his nose well to the ground.

My husband had originally intended to advance a few miles in the direction of Osman Digma's camp, but, hearing from his spies that Osman Digma had gone away, he naturally gave over his intention, and prepared to march straight back. Ibrahim Effendi came up to find out the reason of this, and was greatly elated at finding that there was no enemy to confront. He insisted on an advance, saying, "There is no danger now, so let us make a grand demonstration"!

But amongst all stories told lately, I do not

think they can beat that of the enchanted camel. It is so out of the way and shows so clearly that the Egyptians still live in an atmosphere of the Arabian Nights, that I insert the letters in full. It also explains, to a degree, the belief the Egyptian soldiers have in the Mahdi's promises to make their powder water, for they say, "If he is not inspired, he is without doubt a great magician."

"MONSIEUR LE COMMANDANT DES BASINGUER,

"Nous avons l'honneur de vous exposer qu'aujourd'hui 18 février on à remarqué en ville une chamelle très-suspecte. Les sous-officiers et soldats nourrissent des soupçons à son sujet et n'ont aucune doute que cette chamelle ne soit ensorcelée. Plusieurs d'entre nous l'ont vue à Trinkitat et ont la certitude qu'elle a été poussée vers Souakim dans un but des plus coupables d'autant plus que les Bedouins sont dans l'habitude de se servir de la magie pour arriver à des résultats.

"En consequence, nous venons vous supplier de vouloir bien porter ce fait à la connaissance de qui de droit, pour que cette chamelle soit egorgée le plus tôt possible car il est certain que la présence de cette bête à Souakim causera à Dieu ne plaise, des desordres que l'on regrettera lorsqu'il n'en sera plus temps.

(Signé) "LIEUT. AHMED SAÏD,
"LIEUT. MOHAMED AHMADÈNE,
"SERGENT MOHAMED YOUSEF,
"SERGENT ALY SOUDAN,
"SERGENT SAÎD MOHAMED."

My husband, naturally astonished at the receipt of a letter like this, wanted to have it complete, so he pretended to take it seriously, and returned the letter to the commandant of the battalion with the following memo :—

"Les officiers et sous-officiers d'ont les signatures figurent au bas du rapport ci-dessus sont invités à signalés les causes qui les portent a soupçonner la chamelle dont ils parlent.

(Signé) "SARTORIUS PASHA."

To this the answer came as below, and besides, Khalil Aly, the commandant, verbally declared that he himself had one night shot what appeared to be a hyena, but that in death it had suddenly returned to its original shape, namely, that of a man. Khalil Aly is a very well-educated man as far as general subjects go, and it is extremely astonishing to find him seriously insisting upon such a subject.

"EXCELLENCE,

"Quant aux motifs qui nous portent à mettre en suspicions la susdite chamelle, c'est l'attitude singuliere qu'elle affectait en entrant en ville car il est impossible, en voyant ses façons de croire qu'elle est égarée d'autant plus qu'elle était accompagnée d'une personne inconnue. Ce qui, en outre, nous porte à croire que cette bête est dangereuse, c'est la connaissance que nous avons que dans le Soudan les Bedouins sont, depuis de temps très

reculés dans l'habitude de metamorphoser les hommes en animals et de les envoyer au milieu de leurs ennemis pour attirer des maux de toutes sortes sur eux.

" Voilà, en deux mots, les motifs, que nous invoquons en faveur de nos soupçons les signatures que ci-dessus."

Khalil Aly finishes up with the following :—

" EXCELLENCE,

" À l'appui de ce que viennent d'exposer les officiers et sous-officiers de mon battaillon, j'ai l'honneur de porter a votre connaissance qu'il n'est pas rare de voir, en Soudan des hommes, affecter la forme de léopards et s'introduire de nuit dans les maisons pour les voler. Ce fait et d'une celebrité indeniable et j'ai tenu à le porter à la connaissance de votre Excellence.

(Signé) " KHALIL ALY,

" 1r Major Commandant du bataillon des Basinguer."

The return back to Suakim was without any interest, nothing occurring to vary the monotony of a regular march, carefully carried out with all its accessories of guards, vedettes, etc., etc., and they arrived about noon, the European officers looking sunburnt, but all the better for their outing.

CHAPTER XII.

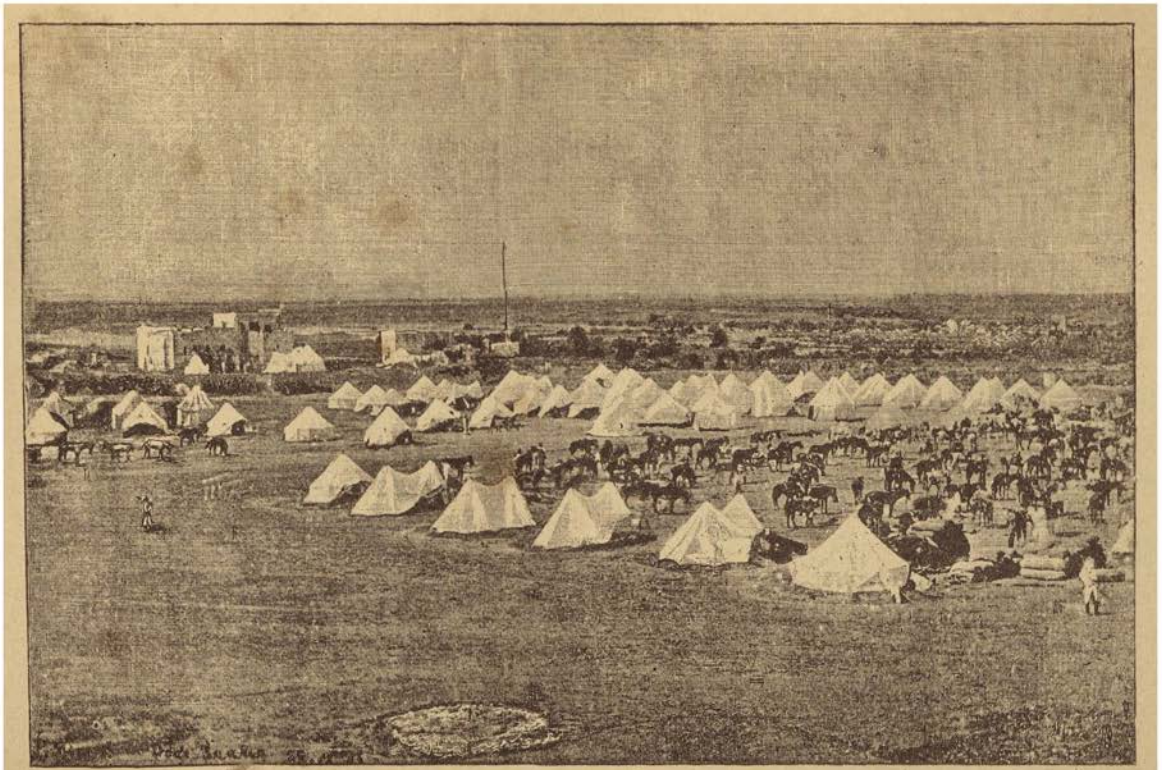
EMBARKATION OF TROOPS.

ARRIVAL OF LAST BATTALION OF ZEBEHR'S SOUDANESE—BAD ARRANGEMENTS AS TO PAY AND RATIONS—MAHOMED ALY WILL NOT ADVANCE TO RELIEVE SINKAT—MANY THINGS WANTING FOR THE ARMY, BUT DELAY NO LONGER POSSIBLE—ARRANGEMENTS FOR WATER—EMBARKING TROOPS—ABYSSINIANS OBJECT TO BE CLOTHED—*SPHINX* RETURNS FROM TRINKITAT—FANATIC BOY—HEARTRENDING LETTER FROM TEWFIK BEY—MY HUSBAND'S ANSWER—TELEGRAPH SHIP *CHILTERN*—SCARE OF GARRISON—DEPARTURE OF MY HUSBAND IN THE *ZAGAZIG*—EXTRAORDINARY WAY OF PULLING CAMELS INTO THE BOATS—A SPY FROM TOKAR—ADVENTURES OF LEVI THE MERCHANT—FIRING AT NIGHT—RETURN OF LEVI—MESSENGER COMES IN FROM BERBER.

THE last battalion of Zebehr's Soudanese has come. They are hardly able to march; they do not know how to fix bayonets; their commanding officer, a most intelligent, French-speaking Turk, and the smartest native officer here, reports that his officers are the very worst he has ever seen—fancy the *worst* of the Egyptian officers!—that they are lieutenants and sub-lieutenants who have been many years on the retired list, and that none are fit to drill a company. The want of discipline of the men was soon proved by their rapid refusal to

obey orders. They had to be brought to reason in the same way as the Bashi-Bazouks before them. A very bad thing, as far as they were concerned, was that they had got three months' pay in advance at a higher rate than the Egyptian troops, but, to make up for it, their ration was proportionately reduced. The consequence was, that they spent their three months' advance, and found themselves on war service with only a prospect of a ration of dry biscuit for the next two and a half months. Besides this, all the Soudanese had brought heaps of women and children with them, and naturally there was more discontent than ever about the ration.

I am sorry to say matters are looking very serious, for Mahomed Alyhas sent back to say that he cannot advance without the help of the soldiers he was promised. Now, as this was exactly what he was *not* promised, it is very evident he wants to back out of it. He also says that Moosa Adam, instead of joining him with 600 men, had only ten followers in camp. The same thing with the old grey-bearded chief Rhotodon, whose photo on the camel we have. A most painful decision has lately been arrived at, namely, that we ourselves cannot relieve Sinkat, for it would be madness to trust our troops in a broken and mountainous country like that through which the Sinkat road runs. We intend to do what we can in the Tokar direction, hoping that a successful move on Tokar may be a great moral support to Tewfik Bey, and a probable incentive for Mahomed Aly to advance.



FLAG STAFF FORT AND CAMP—TURKS AND CAVALRY.

We are still in want of a great many things absolutely necessary for the army, but it is no use waiting, and a final decision having been come to as to the direction in which we are to act, General Baker left to-day for Trinkitat. He took with him a certain number of troops, sufficient to form a fortification, for the purpose of protecting the landing of the rest. The *Tor* and *Gafferiah* have also gone up, the first as a condenser, for at Trinkitat there is no water, and the troops will require about 4,000 gallons a day.

For the last few days we have been watching the troops going past with great interest, knowing, as we do, that the culminating point of our expedition is rapidly coming on. Our anxiety makes us scan closely the looks and the equipment of the soldiers, and certainly, as to size, arms, and regularity of their march, the Egyptian gendarmerie leave nothing to desire; but we can easily see that they have no wish to go on, for parties and sentries have to be kept all round the embarkation points, so as to prevent the men taking advantage of some trivial excuse and getting back to camp again.

The men come down in detachments to a kind of rough quay just behind the governor's house; there they embark in big, deep boats, which are rowed gradually alongside the Khedivial steamers by a couple of men who have only sticks by the way of oars. Fortunately the distance is only about eighty yards, so the first shove off is nearly enough to make the boat reach its destination; but it takes, anyhow,

from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour, and much time is lost in the operation.

Colonel Abdul Russak Bey and the native officers of the head-quarters staff superintended the whole, and very well they did it, for Abdul Russak was up to every one of their dodges and kept them hard at work, and yet he himself could not get over the African abhorrence of work by night; for in spite of General Baker's strictest orders that all were to be ready by daylight, the whole officers and men left off work soon after sunset the night before, although only two hours more would have completed everything.

All the English officers are loud in the praises of the Egyptian soldier when it comes to embarking or provisioning. They say he is quite as easy to manage as the Indian soldier in this way, and never grumbles at his accommodation, or the kind of food he is given. Under Abdul Russak's supervision, they were embarked in the most rapid and expeditious way, each steamer taking about 850 men or their equivalent in horses; and the next morning, when we happened to be on board the *Euryalus* to see them pass, we noticed that they looked so crowded that not a single extra man, horse, or camel could, we thought, be crammed in.

They dipped their flag in passing, and the *Euryalus* returned the compliment, and then the band on board played the Khedivial hymn. Seeing them go off like this made us feel very sad, for, though we hope they may be victorious, still, one

cannot help knowing that some of them at least will not come back. Their poor wives seemed to think so too, for they followed their husbands down to the quay with very sorrowful-looking countenances; and, on returning to the camp, threw up their arms, and made all the gesticulations usual to them in great sorrow.

The *Deb-el-Bar* follows soon, for the two condensers together will only just make up water sufficient. I was much interested to see how all sorts of dodges had to be tried in order to store water. Arm-chests were pitched in and out, powder-barrels ditto; old iron tanks were furbished up, while even a boat was fitted with canvas inside. I had no idea, before that unpainted canvas supported by wooden sides would hold water, but so it is.

My husband had now no time to spare, for he had to superintend the whole embarkation himself. He tried one evening to leave it to his staff officers (Egyptian), as he wanted to look after some new work in the lines, and to remain until late at night on account of a report that the enemy might attack, but he found that the moment he left, the whole of the *employés* walked off, as they said it was getting near sunset, and to-morrow (Bookra) would do as well.

While my husband, who happened for the moment to be in Mr. Wylde's house, was giving orders about the embarkation of more troops for the front, his aide-de-camp, Captain Goodall, came into the room, looking much amused, and reported that the Abyssinians would not be clothed, explaining further

that on being shown trousers they almost mutinied. It appears that, their original dress being very dirty, they had been sent down to get uniform, but that they objected to anything but their customary loose style of clothing. These Abyssinians, twenty-four in number, were all Christians, and came to us from Massowah as volunteers. They are a handsome-looking, copper-coloured race, but quite as savage as the Arabs outside. Nobody speaks their language, and it was therefore only by their horrified gestures, and the faces they made, that one could understand the disgust they felt at the idea of putting on the coarse white trousers of the Egyptian soldier. This indignation was further increased at the sight of the shoes. They had to have their own way at last, for they made us understand that they could not move about with such things on; that they came to fight, but not to wear trousers and boots.

This afternoon we were able to get camels again, and were riding close to the outposts after witnessing some tent-pegging by the cavalry, when an officer came galloping up to us, saying that the general, my husband, wished us to come in as quickly as possible, as the enemy had been seen in the neighbourhood. We therefore returned at a trot, and passed a squadron of Egyptian cavalry who were going out to reconnoitre.

Next day, the 29th of January, three Khedivial steamers came back from Trinkitat, with urgent letters from General Baker to my husband, that troops should be embarked and sent off sharp, as the

steamers would have to return another time before all was completed. My husband then stopped the *Hodeidah* that was going to Massowah, and, as usual, had to superintend the whole himself, as it was absolutely necessary that there should be no delay.

On the 31st Sir W. Hewett came in at twelve in the *Sphinx*. There is no fresh news from Tokar. The troops are all encamped very comfortably at Trinkitat. While the *Sphinx* was there, they saw some rebels on the shore, and let off their big gun at them at 6,000 yards. The shots fell close to and amongst them, and the naval officers told me they never saw any animals run like the camels. They particularly noticed a camel and horse which started off together, but the camel soon out-strode the horse and got far beyond him. One shot killed a man, and the next morning the son, a boy only about thirteen or fourteen at most, rushed in amongst General Baker's troops with a spear, and wounded one of the soldiers before he was caught.

31*st*.—Very bad news has come in from Sinkat. In answer to a letter sent by General Baker, saying that Mahmoud Aly was on his way, a most pitiable one has been received from Tewfik Bey. We now know that only a miracle will save him. At the same time, his letter breathes so much determination and pluck that I cannot help inserting it here.

"Sinkat, le 27 janvier, 1884.

"EXCELLENCE,

"J'ai honneur de prévénir votre Excellence qu'avec un plaisir inexprimable je viens de reçevoir

aujourd'hui la lettre de V. E. datée le 16 de mois courant, j'ai reçu aussi une autre lettre le 25 de ce mois de mon ami Messadaglia Bey, datée le 23 Rabi-arvel, écrit en Arabe, dans laquelle il me previent que deux lettres écrites en Français, l'une de la part de votre Excellence, l'autre de sa part, m'ont été envoyés à Sinkat, mais je suis très malheureux de ne pas les reçevoir jusqu'aujourd'hui. Ce n'est que pas la haute capacité, et l'intelligence splendide, et si connue de V. E. que les tribus mentionés dans la liste ont fait leur soumission au gouvernement. Mahmoud Bey Aly m'a envoyé dire qu'il sera chez moi vendredi le 25, mais malheureusement, il n'est pas encore arrivé. Je l'attends avec impatience, vu que je suis resté privé des nouvelles, pendant plus de quinze jours. J'étais obligé de donner depuis quelques jours 60 drachmes à chaque soldat par jours de biscuits, il m'en reste trois sacs, ½ ardeb de doura qui me suffiront pour le 29 et le 30 du mois' rien autre.

"Trois cheveaux étaient bien malade, et sur le point de crever. Sur ma foi, Excellence, nous les avons mangés même avec la peau; il n'y a plus de chiens ni de chats à Sinkat.

"Je ne pourrais pas expliquer à votre Excellence comment notre position est devenue depuis long temps très malheureuse et misérable. Nous sommes estroppés d'une faiblesse terrible, et si à la fin du mois de janvier nous ne seront pas aidés soit par là force qui arrivera de Souakim avec des vivres, ou par Mahmoud Aly Bey, nous serons certainement

perdus. Une petite bataille a en lieu à Sinkat le 19 courant hors de la place, les détails seront prochainement entre les mains de votre Excellence. Comme je suis sur et certain que notre position ne conviendrait pas tout a fait à votre Excellence, je viens alors par la presente prier chaudement votre Excellence, de vouloir bien donner des ordres sérieuses, pour nous sauver de cette malheureuse position. Je vous prie, en même temps, Excellence, de vouloir bien accepter l'assurance de ma haute consideration. Et en tous cas je suis de votre Excellence le très humble at très devoué serviteur,

"M. TEWFIK.

"P.S.—Si le renfort n'arrivera pas Sinkat le 1re ou le 2de février ni Mahmoud Aly Bey, je serais obligé sans faute de quitter la place pour arriver à Souakim, quoique je ne crois pas que je réusirai, mais je préferé beaucoup de mourrir en bataille, que de faim à Sinkat.

"TEWFIK.

"A. S. E. BAKER PACHA,

"Commandant en Chef de tout le Soudan."

My husband could only write, in answer to this, a full explanation of our circumstances, and tell him that, by order of General Baker, he might make terms with the enemy or take any measures whatever that he might think best for himself. It was a letter that my husband found very hard to write, and he complained bitterly all the time of the little

help we had received, and the untrained crowd we had as fighting men. And yet he said we must advance, for all the world look at our numbers, and not at the quality. It is making us here more than anxious, but it is no use our saying anything, for it would do no good, and of course we must try and carry out what the troops came for. It would never do to hesitate before foreigners. But I wish they were safe back again. God grant it!

The telegraph ship *Chiltern* has just come in, and my husband has sent a full telegram to his Highness the Khedive about affairs in general. He also telegraphed the same to Sir E. Baring. Our camels have gone at last, and we shall have no more pleasant rides—not that that much matters, for my husband goes off to-morrow, and we shall be in too great a state of anxiety for some time to come.

The inhabitants do not seem to think the garrison left behind sufficient, for they yesterday petitioned my husband to remain. The troops in garrison are also uneasy, for at 11 a.m., while he was superintending the embarking of the camels, M. de Benel cantered down to him from the camp, saying that the whole of the men had turned out, as they thought the enemy was close by. My husband galloped up, and found Colonel Iskander Bey there, who reported that the cavalry vedettes had been out all night, and had reported all right, and that he was not able to see anything of the rebels, nor could he tell where the scare had begun, but he had had the greatest difficulty in stopping the soldiers firing

away their ammunition in daylight at absolutely *nothing*. We went up to the roof of the house at once, and with a telescope saw about twenty camel-men that belonged to a friendly tribe; as these were the only ones that could be seen for miles, I suppose they originated the scare. Colonel Iskander Bey is in command until Colonel Harington comes back. He is expected in to-day.

My husband left this morning, the 1st of February, for Trinkitat in the *Zagazig*, with the rest of the men and camels on board. He had to be up all night about it, because, difficult as it is to embark horses, it is still more so as regards the camels; and as to keeping native officers working after dark, it is next to impossible. Finding nothing else to do, we went to see the embarkation last evening. There is no proper landing-place, and the boats are deep cargo ones, which obliged the horses or camels to take a good four-feet jump down into them. They were forced up to the boats by a rope thrown round behind them, and held on to each end by three or four men, while another man in front, hitching a noose on to one of the fore feet, made the animal lift it up just as he came to the boat, after which he had no help for it but to jump. The mules were more troublesome, for they were up to every kind of trick, and often cleared the space around them by kicking apparently in every direction at once. The great trouble, though, were the camels. Their heavy weight and long splay legs gave them such leverage that it took nearly twenty men to each animal. Then,

again, they would sit down, and that was a position in which they could not be pulled over the side of the boat; or else they would slip one of their long legs between the boat and the land, all this time keeping up a tremendous roaring, and shivering with great fright. One way of urging camels was nasty to look at, though certainly very curious; it was that of a man who hung on to the camel's upper nostril by his teeth. He stuck to his hold in the most extraordinary way, just like a bulldog; the camel roared and tried to shake him off, but it was no use, and at last the wretched animal was constrained to put his head down and be hauled into the boat.

Now all the troops have gone except a garrison of 1,500 men. Last night the admiral sent in two small gun-launches to protect the causeway, but everything was quiet. The troops being withdrawn, we feel rather like crabs without our shells; still, I think we really have enough for protection, if not for attack.

A spy came in the day after my husband left. He had been sent by Messadaglia Bey from Trinkitat to Tokar, but was unable to return that way, as he was captured by the rebels and taken before Osman Digma, who ordered him to be put into irons. But, a friend offering to stand surety for him, they let him go. He says Osman Digma is three hours' march from here, and intends attacking the town to-night. Moosa, one of the rebel Sheikhs, and Levi, a merchant of Suakim, are with him; he also reports

there being 500 rebels at Teb. This is probably not true, all our other information making out the number at 2,000.

Levi, the man mentioned above, is a Jew who has lived some ten years in Suakim. He is small and spare, speaking several languages very fairly, and is, I think, a little off his head. Some days ago the idea struck him that he might turn his previous knowledge and acquaintanceship with Osman Digma to the advantage of the Government, by going out and arguing personally with him. For this purpose, he suddenly started with a few small presents to the rebel camp. When he got near there, the rebels' scouts seized and plundered him, and then took him before Osman Digma. There he found arguments of no avail, for he was desired to become a convert at once. To this he made no objection, but without hesitation repeated the Mussulman profession of faith, viz. Allah il Allah, Mahomed r'esoul Allah (God is God, and Mahomed is His prophet). Even after this he found argument of as little use as before, and it was with difficulty he preserved his own life by repeating the profession of faith every time some strange face approached him. He stayed thus two days in the rebels' camp, then made a bolt for it at night, and luckily got back to Suakim safe. There is no doubt that Levi is a very courageous man, and I think he could be made very useful. My husband intends to try and do what he can for him, as, after all, he did a very plucky thing.

I hear that when Levi came in he was dressed

in very dirty clothes, and so, being mistaken for a native, was brought in by the vedettes as a prisoner. He says Osman Digma is close by with 3,000 men, but does not intend to attack the town, as he only wants to get Mahmoud Aly over to his side.

I was woke up at 3 a.m. by the sound of firing, and got up at once, and, of course, could not find the matches. I had to go upstairs to my step-daughter to get a light; then we dressed sharp, and went out into the balcony, for it was so cold and rainy that we could not go up to our usual place at the top of the house. From there we saw that the troops were letting off their rifles at a tremendous pace, and that there appeared to be no return fire. It was rather a nervous moment, as, had the attack really been serious, we should have had to prepare to go on board one of the ships. It turned out, however, to be that a few shots from the enemy scared our raw troops so much that no bugling or orders could stop their letting off their rifles as quick as they could. This afternoon, while we were with Mr. Brewster, watching the purchase of camels, a messenger came in from Berber with a letter rolled up in a small bit of cloth. I have got the cloth still as a memento. I also got the messenger to give me the pipe he was smoking while sitting outside the tent. I noticed it because it was such a peculiar shape. It turned out to be a regular Soudan one. The man was very civil about it, and gave it over at once, saying "that

though he would be deprived of his smoke, he would not mind for the sake of the sitt (lady)." This Berber news was of no moment, as it had long been anticipated by telegraph.

CHAPTER XIII.

BATTLE OF EL-TEB.

DEPARTURE OF MY HUSBAND—COLONEL ISKANDER BEY LEFT IN COMMAND—*EN ROUTE* TO TRINKITAT—ARRIVAL THERE—THE CAMP—FORTIFICATIONS—PROPOSED ORDER OF MARCH—FORTS ON OTHER SIDE OF MORASS—ARRIVAL OF BASHI-BAZOUKS WITHOUT ARMS—TROOPS ALL CROSS TO THE FORT—MR. WATKINS JOINS MY HUSBAND'S STAFF—NIGHT BEFORE BATTLE—EARLY MORNING MARCH—COMPOSITION OF FORCE—ORDERS FOR FORMATION IN CASE OF ATTACK—REASONS FOR THE ABOVE—FIRST GUN FIRED—SIGNS OF THE ENEMY—THEIR CAVALRY TRIED TO TURN OUR FLANK—MAJOR GILES'S CAVALRY SENT TO CHARGE THEM—SKIRMISHERS BEGIN TO FIRE—SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF ENEMY—SQUARES RAPIDLY FORMED—SUNHEIT BATTALION NOT OBEYING ORDERS—ONE SIDE LEFT OPEN—SCARE OF GENDARMERIE—TREMENDOUS RATE OF FIRING—COVER THEMSELVES WITH SMOKE, AND THEN BOLT—GENERAL SARTORIUS TRIES TO REFORM THEM—USELESS—NARROW ESCAPE OF GENERAL BAKER—GENERAL SARTORIUS FORMS TURKISH BATTALION—COMPLETE BREAK-UP OF EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS—IN THEIR ROUT CARRY AWAY WITH THEM BEZINGERS AND MASSOWAH MEN—GALLANT BEHAVIOUR OF COLONEL KAMAL BEY—LAST SEEN OF CAPTAIN WALKER, COLONEL MORICE BEY, AND DR. LESLIE—GALLANT CONDUCT OF MR. SCUDAMORE, *TIMES* CORRESPONDENT—RE-EMBARKATION OF TROOPS—OUR LOSSES—REVIEW OF BATTLE.

ON the morning of the 1st of February the few last camels were embarked in the *Zagazig*, and my husband, placing Colonel Iskander Bey in command

of the garrison of Suakim, gave him the following instructions:—

"Suakim, January 31, 1884.

"From Major-General Sartorius Pasha, commanding at Suakim, to Lieut.-Colonel Iskander Bey, Suakim.

"SIR,

"As you will now be left in command here, owing to my going to Trinkitat to-day, I leave you the following directions and orders, which I request you will follow out.

"As you know, the outer lines are too extended for you to occupy fully, and you must, therefore, restrict your attention to the proper garrisoning of the small forts in the lines.

"Between them you will place the necessary sentries, but nothing more.

"In case of an attack, you will bring all the rest together at some central point, such as the house lately occupied by the commander-in-chief, and from there act as necessary.

"The troops you can dispose of are—

Cairo battalion	108
Alexandria battalion	68
Massowah Blacks	72
Bezinger 2nd battalion	639
Old battalion	320
Bezinger 1st battalion	107
Turkish battalion	35
Band	50
Total ...	1399

Turkish cavalry	...	...	33 men 39 horses
Arab „	...	...	53 „ 34 „
Artillery ...	...	...	186

"This making a force of—

Infantry	1399
Cavalry	86
Artillery	186

Out of these there are about 199 sick.

"The disposal of the force should be as follows:—Beginning from the right of the line, viz. that part lately occupied by the Alexandria battalion.

In the small fort near the sea ...	50	infantry
On the cemetery mound ...	50	„
In the flag-staff fort	20	„
Barracks lately occupied by the European police	100	„
Small fort opposite the Turkish cavalry lines	15	„
Small house close to the head-quarters camp and the Soudanese camp	5	„
Lieut.-General Commanding's house	10	„
On houses on left flank... ...	100	„
At the gate by the bazaar, and the house by the side	50	„
At the gate on the island ...	30	„
Total ...	450	

"You will then have a force left to you of infantry, 750, and cavalry, 50 to 60, to act as reserve, and on any point you may wish.

"In case of a determined attack, you will signal

to H.B.M. ships in harbour as follows, viz. first one rocket, then two rockets together. If the attack continues, two rockets together, and after a short interval another two rockets together.

"You will finish the ditch round the small fort by the Turkish cavalry lines.

"You will isolate the cemetery by a strong, deep ditch.

"You will also have the gates put on at once on the three different doors pointed out to you.

"The water-forts will be occupied as usual, and with the garrisons they now have.

"The rest of the outer positions you can as usual occupy nightly by small forces.

"To sum up the position, the above-mentioned strong points must be held well, and a good look-out is to be kept up, but the whole line cannot and must not be lined in case of attack.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"G. SARTORIUS PASHA,

"Commanding at Suakim."

The above instructions had to be minute and particular, as Colonel Iskander Bey, though a very brave man, was dreadfully afraid of responsibility.

At about 11 a.m., the whole arrangements being completed, we took leave of my husband, and he went on board. We remained in the house, for we did not like to give way before the Egyptian officers. We watched the vessel out of sight with feelings

that can well be imagined. But bad as it was, what *would* our thoughts have been if we had known how great a danger he was going into? *He* knew about it, though he did not tell me, for he made his will before leaving. How lucky it was I did not know or even suspect it!

Now I must for the moment leave off my own observations, and write the rest of the chapter from what was told me by the officers, especially Mr. Scudamore and Captain Goodall. They seem to have very much admired the coral reefs with their little incipient islands gradually forming. They say that on the way to Trinkitat several of them were passed, and great care had to be taken in skirting alongside. The tops in many cases appeared above the water, and a little earth having been somehow wafted on to them, they were covered with a luxuriant crop of grass. The bright white of the coral, with the green grass at the top, peeping out from the deep blue water, was very pretty indeed. Towards the land side the view was much the same as about Suakim, only the mountains retreated further inwards. Approaching Trinkitat, long reaches of sand became visible, then at last the lagoon, which has the island of Trinkitat in its front. Entering the harbour, the encampment came into full view. General Baker had thrown up entrenchments round a sort of half oval, the diameter of which, running along the shore, was about 800 yards, and the perpendicular 400 yards. The left-hand corner was made into an inner redoubt, extra strongly fortified

in order to obtain all the commissariat and other stores.

It was afternoon when the steamer anchored, and just at that time General Baker was returning from the other side of the morass which divided the landing-place and camp from the mainland. He had been searching for the best road by which to cross—an all-important fact to know, for in some places the mud was so deep that it would have buried guns and all. When he came back, General Sartorius went to meet him at his tent, and they had an important consultation about the means of transport. The decision arrived at was, that the camels should all be used for ammunition and water, while the mules, of which there were only a few, should be given over for the little baggage that was absolutely necessary. No tents whatever were to be taken on, and provisions were to be carried as much as possible by the men themselves. The distance from here to Tokar being eighteen miles, an unresisted march would only take one day to go and one to return. All Egyptian soldiers can carry three days' provisions, which, according to the above calculation, would be more than necessary. Still, the mile and a half across the morass would be an exceedingly tiring commencement for a long march, so General Baker determined to throw up a fort on some rising ground on the mainland, take water, etc., over there, and make that the place of his ultimate start.

Accordingly, early on the morning of the 2nd of February, Generals Baker and Sartorius crossed the

morass with a large working party, and threw up a fort of no inconsiderable size on the mainland. This fort was intended, in the first place, as a protection for the main body of the army while crossing the marsh, and afterwards to be used as an intermediate depôt for stores, ammunition, and water. Its position was also important, as the slight rise it was on enabled it to command the plain in front for several miles.

If there is one thing for which the Egyptians are excellent it is making earthworks; their fellaheen bringing-up just suits them for it. By 2 p.m. the troops had completed the large fort, with a fairly deep trench round it, and a smaller fort some seventy-five yards distant from it, on the left front. Two Krupp guns were with much trouble dragged across the morass, and with these the fort was armed. The work was finished by 3.30 p.m., when General Baker returned to camp, leaving General Sartorius with a battalion of Massowah Blacks to guard it. Major Giles had been out on reconnaissance during the day with his Turkish cavalry, and had seen small parties of the enemy on the rising ground in the distance, so it was thought not unlikely that an attack would be made during the night. But the rebels made no movement, and the time passed quietly.

On the afternoon of the 2nd another steamer entered the harbour, bringing 400 Shageer Arabs and 200 Bashi-Bazouks as a further addition to the forces. The steamer arrived straight from Suez. The Arabs had been provided with double-barrelled

smooth-bore muzzle-loaders, while the Bashi-Bazouks had only twenty stand of arms between them. These men had no knowledge of drill, and had left Cairo after the date of our advance had been known there.

On the 3rd General Baker, leaving 200 Egyptians and 300 Shageer Arabs to guard the camp, marched out to the morass fort, with the entire advancing force, the guns, ammunition, and all, and also the small amount of baggage absolutely necessary. The *Deb-el-Bar* and the *Tor* had been condensing for several days past, and water enough to last all the men and animals for some time was taken out to the fort and stored there.

The march across the morass was a most fatiguing one, and no doubt General Baker was quite right in deciding that a halt should be made at the fort. The men did not all arrive until late in the afternoon, and they bivouacked behind the fort, the infantry in line right and left, with the cavalry closing the rear. During the day a Mr. Watkins joined, and was attached to General Sartorius' staff. He had come up from Suez in the vessel with the last detachment of Shageer Arabs. To save the biscuit as much as possible, a lot of cattle were distributed amongst the men. The Blacks were highly delighted, for they are great meat-eaters, and, as their colonel declared, would eat it somehow, cooked or uncooked. The Egyptians were not so content; they do not like raw meat, and looked on with great disgust at the Massowah men, who hardly warmed the flesh before tearing it to pieces and divided it amongst themselves.

By 8 p.m. they had all done, fires were put out, and silence prevailed over the camp. A few of the European officers were still together, discussing the probable events next day would bring forth, but at last even they retired to rest, and so make ready for the fatigues to come. A few shots were fired into camp about 9 p.m., evidently directed at a bright light burning close to General Baker's camp cot; but on its being put out, no more were heard.

The *réveille* was sounded at 4.30 a.m. on the morning of the 4th of February, and by 6.30 all were ready to move. At 7 a.m. the order was given, and the troops marched in two parallel columns of mass of battalions, with battalion deploying distance between the columns. The right column was made up of the Cairo battalion, 650; the Alexandrian, 650; and the Massowah Blacks, 500. The left, the Sunheit Blacks, 500; the Bezingers, 500; and the Turks, 400.

The artillery under Captain Walker, consisting of two Krupps, two gatlings, and two rocket-tubes, were formed between the columns. The Cairo battalion, deploying to the left to form the front face as detailed below, would thus at once protect the guns. They had an escort of two companies of the Alexandria battalion, and also the forty-seven European police under Major Maletta and Captains Rucca and Manheim. The infantry were especially brigaded under Colonel Kamal Bey, who had orders to form squares the moment the enemy appeared, viz. one big square of the Cairo battalion on the front face, the Alexandrian on the right, the Sunheit Blacks on the left,

and the Bezingers in the rear. At the same time, the Turks and Massowah Blacks, moving out a little each on their side, were to form battalion squares, flanking both sides of the big square.

Before starting, General Baker warned the troops that should there be an attack he expected it from the left front. The Egyptian cavalry (300) was in front of the left, and the Turkish cavalry (150) was a couple of hundred yards in front of the main body of troops. The baggage and ammunition camels were in the rear, and, when the square was formed, were to be in the middle of it if the rear was in any way pressed, but not otherwise, as the two flank squares were sufficient protection.

The reason the whole march was not made in square was, that the troops were so little drilled as to make it very difficult for them to advance in that formation; also the progress would have been so slow as to necessitate for the march more than double the time we could afford, on account of our want of transport to carry water and absolute necessaries. The least trustworthy troops had to go in front, for they were the only ones that could march decently. General Sartorius had also proposed battalion squares, but was overruled, as it was conclusively proved that the want of training would almost certainly set one battalion square firing into the other.

The cavalry were for the moment specially directed by General Baker, who sent them a long way in advance in order to give plenty of notice when the enemy appeared. General Sartorius himself, after

repeating the orders as to formation in case of attack to every officer concerned, joined General Baker for a short time, and then dropped behind a little, so as to have a full view of his whole division.

It was on the above plan that the advance was made. The morning was very dull and misty, heavy rain fell from time to time, and frequent halts had to be made to close up the columns.

The ground marched over was a rolling plain, sparsely covered with small bush about eighteen inches high, and which formed no impediment to a horse galloping. Each roll of the plain covered a distance of about two and a half miles. For the first couple of miles nothing occurred; after that General Baker, who was about 400 yards ahead of the infantry, sent to General Sartorius for a gun, in order to search out the crest of the next rise of the ground. Seeing some difficulty about it, General Sartorius, who by this time had come close up, got off his horse and sighted the gun, and the first shot was fired. Nothing, however, appearing, it was limbered up, and the whole of the troops advanced again, but very cautiously, as the rain that came down now and then much obscured the view ahead. In this way another two miles was got over, when two small flags were seen on the top of the next rise, and at the same time the scouts, who had almost reached the place of the flags, began to fire, and one of them came back to report. General Baker ordered three more rounds to be fired from the gun, the last of which, fired with an elevation of 1,800 yards, fell

accurately. Just then the skirmishing cavalry began to fire, and a small body, some twenty or thirty, of the enemy's cavalry were observed trying to get round our right flank. General Baker then ordered Major Giles to draw swords and gallop after the enemy. The Turks did so in capital style, but, as was to be expected, soon became wild and out of control.

The rebels did not allow them to come up close, but led them a long chase round across our front to the left. General Baker, seeing that the Turks were pursuing too far, despatched Major Harvey to recall Major Giles; Major Harvey, accompanied by Colonel Burnaby, galloped off, but before he could reach Major Giles, the Turks from pursuers had become pursued. They had been led right up to the main force of the rebels, who, lying behind the rise, were hidden from the Egyptian scouts. At this time more of the scouts from the left front came in to report a large force of rebels on that side, and immediately afterwards the enemy were seen running over the hill towards us, and the Egyptian cavalry and skirmishers rushed back *en masse*, breaking in upon Baker and his staff. Six of Major Giles's men were killed by the fire of our own skirmishers. At the very first notice of the approach of the enemy, Colonel Achmet Kamal Bey ordered the squares to be formed, and for the first few seconds all went well. The Cairo and Alexandria battalions both formed up, but were no sooner in their places than they commenced firing furiously in the air at such a rate, that in less

than a quarter of a minute the whole place was completely covered with smoke, and no orders could be heard, besides which their example had unfortunately caused the others to fire in the same way. The Turks even did so, although they were undoubtedly brave men, thereby proving the uselessness of untrained soldiers, however good they might become after proper instruction. General Sartorius, who was waiting at his post a couple of hundred yards in front of the infantry, came up at a gallop. By the time he arrived, of the whole of the formation ordered only the left of the square was not formed, so he tried to get the reserve companies to come up; but instead of obeying orders they remained where they were, and the front ranks, kneeling, began firing.

Fortunately for General Sartorius, who was but ten or twelve paces from them, they fired in the air. A like happy chance attended General Baker shortly afterwards, who rode down the left flank under a heavy fire, trying to stop them. Luckily it was so misdirected as to kill one person only of his staff. This was Lieutenant Camelieri, an Austrian officer, who had volunteered as a scout. At the same time the Egyptian part of the escort to the guns fired straight into them, and killed many of the men. The rest of the gunners took the hint and bolted. General Sartorius, meeting Kamal Bey, told him to try and get the reserve up to close the square, whilst he himself went over to the Turkish battalion and saw that they formed theirs up. In the confusion the Turks had instinctively tried to make up for the

Sunheit battalion; but General Sartorius, seeing the Cairo and Alexandria battalions on the move, ordered Yusef Bey, the commanding officer of the Turks, to remain where he was, and to close up his square, which was at once done. A moment before General Sartorius had seen the Massowah Blacks going quite steadily about their work, that is, moving to the right to form their battalion square. The Bezingers, too, were in the act of formation; and, in fact, the only ones who went wrong were the Sunheit Blacks, whose commander seemed to have gone off his head, and ordered his battalion to deploy to the front, instead of wheeling back the companies to form his side of the big square. The time occupied by all these movements, etc., was less than a couple of minutes, and the enemy still being a long way off, everything could easily have been remedied, when suddenly the Cairo and Alexandria battalions surged inwards, carried away a part of the Turkish square (the latter afterwards got into position again), and completely routed the Massowah Blacks. General Sartorius and Achmet Kamal Bey rushed into the midst of them and endeavoured to persuade them to stand, telling them there was no enemy behind them; but all to no avail. The first sight of the rebels, who were not within 1,000 yards of them, made them so altogether panic-stricken that it was impossible to get them to do anything. General Sartorius and Colonel Achmet Kamal Bey were carried away in the surging crowd for nearly 200 yards, and were only able to extricate themselves when the rebels,

coming up, had thinned the confused ranks with their spears, and enabled their horses to move. The Turks and the Sunheit Blacks got together, owing to the latter falling back on the former; but their fire was about as wild as the Egyptians, and they must have got rid of their hundred rounds in less than fifteen minutes, as might, indeed, have been expected from young troops such as the Turks, or from troops so badly drilled and officered as were the Sunheit Blacks. When the enemy first approached, General Baker had ordered back the Krupp gun he had forward with him; but, on account of the fear of the gunners, and the confusion into which they were thrown by the rout of the native cavalry, the gun never reached the square, the gunners deserting half-way, some of them being killed by one or two rebels on horseback who pursued the cavalry. The other guns also were not brought into action, it being impossible, in the confusion and crush caused by the rout of the Alexandria and Cairo battalions, to get the mules to wheel. It was near these guns that Captain Walker, Colonel Morice Bey, and Doctor Armand Leslie were last seen. When General Sartorius got out of the square he joined General Baker, who sent him to try and stem the retreat of the Egyptian cavalry. General Sartorius headed the cavalry, and for a short time checked them by shooting two men, but when he left them for a moment to speak to General Baker, they at once bolted off again. There was now no longer any square, but only a confused, struggling mass of

cavalry, infantry, mules, camels, falling baggage, and wounded or dying men. All were struggling, shrieking, firing, and their only device seemed to be to shelter themselves one behind another.

The rebels were now all round the disorganized crowd, and were spearing men right and left, the Egyptians offering no resistance, but falling on their knees and holding up their hands, begging for mercy, which, needless to say, was not granted them.

During this time a most gallant action was performed by Mr. Scudamore, the correspondent of the *Times*. Lieutenant Barton had lost his horse, and, being very stout, could not get on further. Just then he came across Mr. Scudamore, and begged for some help. Mr. Scudamore, in the most gallant way, dismounted, gave the stout man his horse, saying at the same time that he, Scudamore, was light and able to run. Such an action in the middle of so much danger deserves the *greatest* praise. Fortunately, Lieutenant Maxwell, one of the scouts, was not far off, and he shortly after took Scudamore up behind him. Mr. Macdonald, the *Daily News'* correspondent, had also an escape, for his horse got ill in the beginning of the day, and he would have been in great danger had not General Sartorius lent him his second charger. He himself afterwards said the general had saved his life. Both Mr. Cameron and Mr. Macdonald saw from the very first that a disaster was going to ensue, and, seeing there was nothing else for them to do, they made the best of their way back again from the beginning.

General Baker, finding that it was no use trying to do anything with the cavalry, sent General Sartorius on to stop the men at the fort. In this he was aided by Mr. Bewley and Lieutenant Maxwell, and by firing at the men as they sought to pass them, they succeeded for a time in arresting their flight, but to no great purpose, as most of them had thrown away their rifles and side-arms while escaping from the rebels. General Baker shortly afterwards came up. He had been at one time in great danger, for while seeking to rally the men in the broken square he had been quite cut off for a time, and had narrowly escaped a spear thrown at him. General Sartorius, while also trying to reform the square, had lost Mr. Watkins and three of his staff, who were killed close to him; and Captain Goodall, who throughout behaved very well indeed, so my husband says, came up about the same time. He had had a spear thrown through his coat, but he shot the thrower of it for his pains.

The whole remnant of the wretched army now crossed in straggling parties to the landing-place. By the time General Sartorius reached the shore, the Egyptians and a good many of the Bezingers had already got on board ship, and seeing the state of panic of the men, and the impossibility of doing anything with them should the rebels attempt to follow across the morass, it was decided that the troops should embark at once. As soon as this was known, all the Egyptian officers made haste to get on board, leaving their men on shore. They had

to be sent for, and when they were brought back, most of them escaped and crept off again as soon as the general's back was turned. General Baker, General Sartorius, Major Harvey, and Lieut.-Colonel Hay had to do the work themselves, and were up nearly all the night. A more disgraceful ending to a desperate day's work could with difficulty be conceived.

The names of the English officers killed were—Colonel Morice Bey, Doctor Armand Leslie, Captain Forrestier Walker, Lieutenant Carroll, Lieutenant Smith, Lieutenant Watkins, and a groom of General Baker's, named Wells. Colonel Abdul Russak Bey, General Baker's native chief of staff, was killed close behind him. His horse was ham-strung, and he was speared while falling. Besides these, the whole of the European police, forty-seven in number, except Major Maletta, and two who remained behind sick, were killed, and the latter escaped by a mere accident.

The total loss of men was 2,332. Of all those left behind not one was saved, for of the rebels, who by that time had become very numerous, some followed up to the fort, while the rest had completely surrounded the struggling mass, of which the remains of the square was then composed. The ships remained in Trinkitat till midday on the 6th, but not one straggler appeared from the moment when the generals quitted the morass fort.

The enemy's loss was probably small. Their whole attacking force was perhaps about the same as ours,

but when they first approached they were not more than 700 or 800 strong. They hesitated for some time to attack, only hovering round the flanks, and any show of forming front would have repulsed them.

Going over the account of this battle, or rather flight, it is wonderful to think that such a thing should happen to 4,000 men, whatever their individual value might be. The slightest show of resistance would probably have prevented the enemy closing, and yet our men broke before a single one had been killed or even wounded. Even the Turkish cavalry behaved badly, for once broken and turned, they allowed themselves to be pursued and cut down unresistingly by a single horseman. Without actually seeing it, no one could believe how the troops fired in the air. They did not put their rifles to their shoulders, but, holding them close to their cartridge-boxes, loaded and touched off the trigger as fast as possible. General Hicks complained of this; and also in the great Abyssinian defeat the same was the case.

With General Baker's army were a great many who might have become first-rate soldiers, but they required good drilling. This they could not have got with the native officers sent, even if there had been time. No one knows this better than a military man, and if the Egyptian army could not go as a whole, yet the pick of their officers should have come. What *did* come, the commanding officer of the last Bezingers reported as being unable to wheel

a company, as lieutenants and sub-lieutenants many years on the retired list, and as the worst officers he had ever seen!

Another remark by an officer deserves, I think, to be noted here, namely, that the bayonet is a good weapon, but its use must be taught. Now *I myself* know that there was no time for anything of the kind; the troops had to be shown how to move, and the time taken up in making fortifications quite precluded the possibility of any other instructions. I still say that the military and other authorities at Cairo should not have allowed General Baker to advance, they ought not to have left it to him, for they could not but know that he himself had no choice.

Transport in any quantity was found when the British troops came, and yet the Egyptians had hardly enough to carry water. It is impossible that, with the authority possessed then at Cairo by the principal English officials, there could have been any real difficulty.

What *was* done was that Mr. Clifford Lloyd took the opportunity of abolishing, without previous notice, the places of those who were then loyally and faithfully risking their lives for the Egyptian Government. I need hardly say that this was quite against the wishes of his Highness the Khedive and the native ministers, who strongly disclaimed having any hand in it, and declared such conduct to be monstrous.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEPARTURE FROM SUAKIM.

ARRIVAL OF *RANGER* FROM TRINKITAT—CAPTAIN GOODALL BRINGS NEWS OF MY HUSBAND'S SAFETY—NAMES OF ENGLISH OFFICERS KILLED — DISEMBARKATION OF TROOPS — SOUDANESE WOMEN MOURNING THEIR HUSBANDS—ENGLISH SAILORS MANNING FORTS —CAPTAIN OF THE *TOR* AND HIS CONDENSER—SIR WILLIAM HEWETT APPOINTED GOVERNOR-GENERAL—MR. BREWSTER SUB-GOVERNOR—FALL OF SINKAT — MASSACRE OF GARRISON— BIOGRAPHY OF TEWFIK BEY FROM HOME NEWS—WE EMBARK ON BOARD *NEGILAH*—REGRETS AT LEAVING SUAKIM—ARRIVAL AT JEDDA—EVE'S TOMB—ARABS' SUPERSTITION ABOUT ADAM —DESCRIPTION OF TOWN—RE-EMBARK AND ARRIVAL AT SUEZ —CAIRO AGAIN—ABOLITION OF GENDARMERIE BY MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD—RECOLLECTIONS OF MINISTERS AND OTHERS WE MET IN CAIRO.

THE *Ranger* came in on the 5th of February at 3 p.m., bringing the news of the defeat of General Baker's army. We had had lunch, our mess having been reduced to Colonel Harington, who was commanding the garrison, Mr. Brewster, my step-daughter, and myself, and had ensconced ourselves in long chairs for a doze, when Lieutenant Philips from the *Euryalus* came in, saying that the *Ranger* had arrived from Trinkitat, and that the

admiral wished to see Colonel Harington; but he would tell us nothing else. Colonel Harington accordingly went off, and we were left in great suspense, though we did not expect any bad news. We then went on to the balcony, and were watching for about half an hour, when we saw Captain Goodall coming up in one of the ship's boats. As he neared our landing-place, he called out, "Mrs. Sartorius, your husband is safe!" and then I began to think there must have been some severe fighting; but when he had landed and taken me into the drawing-room, telling me he had something very important to tell me that for the present no one else must know, I felt there had been some disaster, and so it proved. He then explained General Baker's defeat; how the Egyptian soldiers had become demoralized, and had even laid down their arms and allowed themselves to be butchered by the rebels. I could not help feeling what a sad termination it was to all our hopes, for though we had great doubts as to the Egyptians really fighting, still we did not expect such a complete defeat. In continuation, Captain Goodall showed me the names of those who had fallen, amongst others poor Colonel Morice Bey, little Abdul Russak, Captain Walker, and Dr. Leslie. It was exceedingly sad, for it seemed like losing relations, we had been so intimate with them.

About 5 p.m. my husband arrived, and I was very glad to see him safe and sound, and to hear that General Baker and Colonel Burnaby were

equally so. By-the-by, they say about Colonel Burnaby and General Baker that one is as plucky and cool as the other; and everybody knows what a compliment it is to be thus compared to General Baker. I hear that if the rebels had followed them up, hardly a man would have escaped. General Baker also returned about 6 p.m. with the rest, as he feared an immediate attack on Suakim, and therefore wanted to mass his troops here. It was a most painful sight to see these wretched men land, all in a fearful plight, many of them only half clothed, having thrown away their things to run all the faster from the enemy. Horses without any owners passed our house, some wounded, others tired out. One poor horse had a spear-wound through its nose. Instead of going on to camp, it wandered into our farmyard, where we gave it water and food, and had its nose washed; but in spite of our care the poor brute died the next day. By the time the men had landed the news had reached the camp, and crowds of Soudanese women rushed down to meet their husbands. It was really most painful to see the emotion of these poor creatures. On finding that their belongings were not amongst the survivors, they screamed and yelled, threw up their arms, and got so excited that I began to cry in sympathy with them. One woman sat down in the road, and was with difficulty raised and taken into camp by her people. I hope *never* to see such a sight again; once in one's life is quite enough.

We were all wondering what will be the effect of the news of General Baker's defeat in England; for now it is evident Egypt has no force with which to attack, or even to defend herself. How easily all this might have been obviated if a little help had been given before the Arabs had got their fanatical courage up by continual small successes! If the Egyptian army even had been sent out in October, very likely not a life need have been lost, for, being ready drilled, they could have marched off at once, and relieved Sinkat and Tokar before the tribes had gathered together. But, as the old adage says, "It is easy to be wise after the event."

The admiral has landed 250 sailors to hold the principal forts, in case of an attack by the enemy. Of course he does not intend to man the entire lines, as that would take too many men; he only insures being able to drive out the enemy in the morning, in case they should by any chance force their way into the town at night. There is no counting on the Egyptian soldiers, as they are so demoralized that some of them even refused to go up to camp, preferring to remain in the island, where they think they are safer.

The enemy did not attack as we expected, so we had a quiet night, which was much required after the excitement of the day. It seems a long time already since the troops came back, and yet it is really only two days, for it is the 7th to-day. General Baker went round about 1 a.m., and for the first time was unable to pass at one of the forts

without knowing the word. We always used to have it, but, in spite of repeated orders and punishments, could not make the native troops understand its use. . . . In this case General Baker tried to get past by announcing his name. "I don't care," says the sentry; "General Baker or any one else, you can't pass without the word." "Call your officer," said General Baker. "Can't leave my post," was the answer; and so General Baker had to leave that part of the lines unvisited. English officers go round three or four times a night now, and the most careful precautions are taken to prevent our being surprised.

We heard to-day about some of the doings of the captain of the *Tor* condenser. As explained before, there was a great want of water at Trinkitat, so the *Tor* was sent to condense as rapidly as possible. The evening after the arrival of the first troops General Baker happened to look in her direction, and found that the fires were not alight. He at once sent for the captain, who, after much trouble, was found quietly taking coffee on board one of the other steamers. When questioned by General Baker, he calmly admitted that he had put out the fires, and was going to begin again next morning. Now, as all the calculations for water were based on twenty-four hours' continuous work, General Baker naturally got very angry, and gave notice to the little captain, that if the tanks and water-receptacles were not all full by nine o'clock the next morning he would be tried by court-martial and shot. Accordingly smoke

SUAKIM FROM THE HARBOUR.

was soon seen issuing from the funnel, lights were kept up all night, and when at the appointed time General Baker inspected the tanks, they were all found full! The above proceedings seem greatly to have raised the general in the captain's esteem, for he has several times since said that his Excelency the Pasha is a great man; no one can *mistake* his orders!

There has been little going on for the last two days; and, indeed, we have not had the spirits to do much, the sight of the men coming back in so deplorable a condition, and in such a state of fear and misery, being so depressing. But, above all, there are the painful thoughts that many with whom we were so intimate are lost to us for ever—all this makes us very sad, and prevents us having the energy to set ourselves to do anything even in the way of amusement. Amongst those we seem to miss most is kind and pleasant Colonel Morice Bey. Scarcely a week has passed since we were at tiffin with him, and he was talking so gaily about our return to Cairo. What dreadful news it will be for his poor wife! Colonel Abdul Russak Bey is also gone, and, poor fellow! he had many depending on him. I heartily hope that the families of the European police volunteers will not be left unsupported, for those men fought indeed bravely, three only out of the forty-seven coming back to Cairo. Good-natured little Yusef Bey, too; it will be a terrible blow to his father, who my husband knew well when he was at Constantinople. Captain F. Walker, who escaped

with General Hicks, and therefore the massacre there, has, after all, met that fate here. Lieutenant Watkins, who went up with my husband, joined one day and was killed the next; he, poor fellow! was married to Miss Hansard (Hansard the parliamentary recorder). He had left his wife's direction, with all necessary instructions, so he evidently had some idea of the probable danger. What a dreadful blow it will be to her! Lastly, of those we knew, come the two German photographers (from the father of Bode my husband has received a most sorrowful letter). General Baker has lost his English groom; and, indeed, the subject is too much for me to continue writing about. But, with all these losses, how grateful I feel that my husband was not amongst them! They all say he had many narrow escapes. How angry it makes one to think of the intense cowardice that brought all this about!

On the 10th of February a telegram came appointing Sir W. Hewett governor-general, and one of his first acts was to get rid of the Egyptian governor-general, Mahomed Pasha Wassif, who was trying a little obstruction. All the earthworks are being increased in strength. My husband has been employed very hard reorganizing the shattered troops, and he finds great difficulty, as so many officers have been killed. There was always a very short complement, and now it is worse than ever—the Soudanese especially having come from Cairo so short-handed as to be hardly workable. It is now we find out how much poor Abdul Russak was

wanted, for he knew his men too well to permit of the opposition that my husband has to meet with. But there is no help for it, and certainly my husband is beginning to get over it and reform the regiments into order. This evening at 11 p.m., while sitting in the verandah, we heard some shots, and, looking in that direction, saw a lot of big fires just lit up about two miles away. All the troops moved on to their positions, but nothing came of it.

Next morning I heard that these fires were made by the rebels whilst they plundered some melon-gardens. The fuel was close at hand, for in each of these melon-gardens the cultivator piles up the grass he digs up in some central place. General Baker, Colonel Burnaby, and my husband had rather a narrow shave last night. They were sitting together just when the first shots were fired, and a bullet passed within a few inches of them.

On the 12th of February Mr. Brewster was appointed sub-governor, and from his perfect knowledge of Arabic and the manners and customs of the people, he will no doubt be a first-rate man for the place. Our latest news tells us that a great fuss is going on in England over this business; even Cairo has awoke at last, and now it will be worse than ever, for I am very sorry to have to write that news has come of the fall of Sinkat, and the massacre of all the men but six, and part of the women and children. Tewfik Bey died, as he had said he would, bravely fighting. The first knowledge we had of the sad event were the screams of the women

who had relations at Sinkat. It was inexpressibly mournful.

One of the men of Zebehr Pasha's black battalion took his commanding officer's horse and deserted to the enemy to-day, the 12th of February. The 2nd battalion of these same men were also very mutinous, and my husband had to severely koorbash two of them. The telegrams to-day tell us of the determination of the English Government to take the affairs of the Soudan into their hands. All the native troops are to go back as soon as possible, and English are to replace them. One ridiculous thing that has lately happened is sending Colonel Parr, with fifteen Egyptian officers, to pick out and form a black regiment. Colonel Parr himself is, they say, an A-1 officer, but even I cannot help laughing at the idea of more officers of the type I have seen.

The *Carysfort* has just come in with 800 marines. Admiral Hewett does not now think the town safe for us, and as my husband is soon going, we have determined to return to Cairo on the 16th, by the *Negilah*. We commenced, therefore, to make our preparations, and are rather glad to go, as it is evident that all in future must be done by English troops, and we shall not have anything to do with them. They are coming in rapidly, and will no doubt soon show the Arabs a very different style of fighting to that which they have as yet seen; but I will not go on about them, as the English papers have chronicled minutely every possible fact far better than I can write. It was, nevertheless,

with a feeling akin to regret that we took a last look at Suakim on the 16th of February, when we sailed out of the harbour in the *Negilah*, for we had spent there many happy, if some sorrowful, moments, and the exciting life we had led there during the last three months we cannot expect to experience another time. We have left friends behind whom we hope to see again; we have left others whom we shall not meet here below, but whose remembrance is indelibly impressed on our minds, and whose gallant conduct, when they fell on the fatal field of Teb, has won for them undying renown.

Colonel Harington went with us, and we started at 11 a.m. for Jedda, which is to be our first port. It took us twenty-four hours to get across, and on arrival we went to Mr. Wylde's house. His agent, Mr. Russell, came on board to meet us, and was most kind while we were there. We were very glad to get off the vessel, for it was a very dirty one, even for a Khedivial. We had plenty of leisure to see the town, as the vessel remained there two days. Jedda itself is a somewhat magnified Suakim. The houses are very much higher, some having as many as six storeys. Their general shape is like those at Suakim, and they have the same pretty carved wooden balconies. A few of the houses are painted in gay colours, thus giving a little contrast to the shining white of the coral. The principal bazaar is a very long street, decently clean, covered over, and all lined with small shops. European ladies are

evidently a rarity, for whenever we stopped crowds gathered round to stare at us.

One afternoon we walked through the Medina gate to see the celebrated spot which all Easterns consider Eve's tomb. It is nothing but a simple enclosure, 375 feet by 12 feet. At the head grows a palm tree, marking the position of Eve's head; in the centre a little shrine, her heart; and another small shrine, her feet. The devotees, on their way to Mecca, come here to pray and give alms. The tomb is not covered, and the walls around are only about four feet high. Adam is supposed to be buried at Ceylon, and with reference to him the following conversation, which took place between an Englishman, who was being shown Eve's tomb, and a native, indicates the Arab superstition. The Englishman asked, "Where is Adam buried?" "Why," said in a contemptuous tone the native, "don't you know that he was buried at Ceylon?" "No," said the Englishman, "I don't; and if he is, how did he get there?" "Why, in a dhow, to be sure." "But, if Eve was 375 feet long, and you say Adam was still taller, how did he go in a dhow?" "One dhow!" said the other, not to be beaten; "he went in a hundred, of course!" Thus, showing that the Arab's belief was not to be shaken by practical arithmetic like that of Bishop Colenso's Caffir.

Leaving Eve's tomb, we came in by the Mecca gate, which has only within the last few years been opened for passage to Christians. The town itself is in the possession of the Turks, and owes its import-

ance to being the landing-place of the many thousands of pilgrims that yearly flock to Mecca. The latter town is only forty miles distant. It has no particular commerce, its sole product being apparently black coral, which is dull in colour, and only fit to be made into beads. We were unable to go far outside the walls which surround the town, owing to the Bedouins, who swarm close by. In the evening we dined with Mr. Oswald, a very pleasant person who lives here. He gave me a pretty praying-carpet; I was glad to get it as a specimen of what the Mussulmans of the country use.

The passage to Suez was rather rough, and the steamer did not anchor there till the 23rd of February. We stayed one day at the hotel, where we met Major Martin, who with Colonels Coetlogone and Colborne are the only three now living of the original officers with General Hicks. He is a very fine, big man, and one would have thought able to stand any climate, but the Soudan knocked him over at once, and sent him back sick, fortunately for him.

On arriving at Cairo, we were very sorry to part with Colonel Harington, for he has been so very kind to us, and was never tired of arranging everything, small or great. At our house we found everything in order, Anna Debenac, our Italian servant, having behaved very well in looking after the house during our absence. But there was plenty to do, and the time soon passed, our only anxiety being that my husband had gone up again to Trinkitat, intending to accompany the British troops in the impending

battle. About these events I will not write here, for, as I said before, the English papers have had the whole details.

When my husband came back, the Khedive was extremely gracious and kind, and so were all the native ministers. But it has taken us somewhat by surprise to find that Mr. Clifford Lloyd has, in the absence of General Baker and my husband, changed the gendarmerie into a so-called police, and abolished thereby the place my husband held. So we shall return in a week or two to Bombay, where my husband's post in the Bombay Army has been kept open for him ever since his services were lent to the Egyptian Government. It appears, from what my husband says, that Mr. Clifford Lloyd has completely done away with General Baker's system—for what reason goodness knows, as General Baker was applying the new ideas gradually, and everything was working well, and all the ministers were pleased. Now no one is pleased, and only yesterday they discussed a law to put Lower Egypt in a state of siege, owing to the enormous increase of serious robberies, thereby admitting that the new police were unable to cope with them. I am very sorry to leave Cairo, but can understand that people having such diametrically opposite views cannot work together.

A very good book, entitled "Khedives and Pashas," has lately been published. I do not quite agree with all the author says, but his description of Nubar Pasha is quite accurate. No man in Egypt could be more civil, polite, and kind. In the opinion

of all I have heard, he has a thorough grasp of affairs, and the splendid manner in which he has lately guided the administration marks him out pre-eminently for the place he now holds. Khairi Pasha, late Minister of the Interior, is one of those not quite fairly described in the same book. It is true, he did not get on with Mr. Clifford Lloyd, but he knew too well that it was impossible for a set of new schemes to be foisted suddenly on the country, and he was too independent to stand the way Mr. Clifford Lloyd shoved him on one side. Besides, there has never been any doubt expressed as to his honesty. This, in a country where the slightest suspicion is quickly rumoured into positive fact, speaks volumes for the Pasha. Of the principal Englishmen, namely, Sir Evelyn Baring, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Mr. E. Vincent, I do not intend to say anything, as their fame is spread far and wide. The first as a great financier ; the second for his doings at the Cape, etc. (a long line of etc.'s) ; and the third as having fairly earned a European position at the early age of twenty-six.

Among the non-official foreigners Baron de Malortie holds the first place. He has written an excellent series of papers on Egypt, showing a knowledge of the country only second to that of Nubar Pasha. A young friend of my husband's, Mr. Ornstein, is, they say, a most able and rising man, but I had not the pleasure of knowing him.

There has been occasion to say a great deal against the Egyptian proper as a soldier, and there is no

doubt that the fellah cannot be educated into bravery; but there are exceptions, and a very brilliant one is Colonel Kamal Bey. My husband is never tired of talking about his coolness and pluck during the Teb defeat. He never lost his presence of mind for one moment, and did all in his power to retrieve the day. Instead of making much of a man who, amongst his countrymen, showed such excellent qualities, the gross injustice was perpetrated of putting him, on his return, on the half-pay of a rank below that he held in the Soudan. Major Maletta, who volunteered and commanded the detachment of police, was equally badly, if not worse treated. Others, whose names I do not remember, also suffered in the same way.

The *Egyptian Gazette*, which just now lies before me, reminds me of the two principal papers, viz. the *Egyptian Gazette* (editor, Mr. Philip), which ably gives the English view of any question that arises. To this paper Mr Bell, the energetic correspondent of the *Times*, is a valued contributor. The other paper is the *Bosphore Egyptian* (editor, Monsieur Giraud), whose articles are always good and amusing, though they unfortunately lose a great deal of their force by being occasionally very scurrilous.

In conclusion, though, of course, I hardly expect anybody to pay much attention to my opinions, yet my own knowledge of French and Italian has enabled me to talk confidentially with many foreigners, and my idea is, that English *employés*, to be successful, must know the language of the country to some degree, but, above all, they should not land in Egypt

without being able to speak French fluently. It is no use having the conventional school knowledge, but people must be able to explain thoroughly what they want done. If they cannot do so, misunderstandings invariably arise which make the superior energy, etc., of the foreign *employé* of less value than that of the usual native. I think it is even more important for the subordinates to have this knowledge than the heads of departments, because it is the former that have to carry out the details in immediate contact with the people of the country.

I attribute the intense dislike that the people of the country and foreigners have towards us, to this fact, and no other.

THE END.

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